Exploring the power to change : fair trade, development and handicraft production in Bangladesh

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the impact of Fair Trade handicraft production on women in Bangladesh. The analysis applies the Circuit of Culture and concepts from development practice to uncover the varied and complementary meanings and institutional practices of Fair Trade Organizations (FTOs) in Bangladesh, and the essential role they play in defining and delivering the social goals of Fair Trade. The study employs quantitative and qualitative methodologies, comparing Fair Trade producers to other similar women not involved in Fair Trade, and comparing the outcomes of different Fair Trade producer groups. Fair Trade handicraft production has a positive impact on both chronic and transitory poverty, not only because of the fair wage/price offered, but also due to the pro-poor policies and additional financial benefits provided by the FTOs in the study. The social wellbeing of many producers is increased due to the opportunities provided through Fair Trade employment for new experiences, such as being a member of a group, to travel and to meet new people, and to learn new skills. Fair Trade handicraft employment also has an impact on promoting rural-urban linkages, supporting other economic strategies of the household, and providing additional social networks. However, such advantages of Fair Trade are not enough to move people out of poverty, or to deal adequately with the many vulnerabilities experienced by poor people in Bangladesh. Fair Trade activities are geographically and socially specific with impact related to national and local context: thus, improvements in outcomes need to consider the particular social, physical and institutional arrangements within which Fair Trade functions. Findings from the study have relevance to the theorizing of Fair Trade and to assessing impact, with policy implications for FTOs. The findings also provide insights into debates within development such as the role of social capital in economic relations, measuring and analysing poverty, the impact and uses of micro-finance, and an analysis of the empowerment potential of providing paid work to women.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATO	Alternative Trading Organization
BDS	Business Development Skills
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CLARO	Swiss Fair Trade Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSU	Colorado State University
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOTA	ECOTA Fair Trade Forum, Bangladesh
EFTA	European Fair Trade Association
ET	Ethical Trade
ETI	Ethical Trading Initiative, UK
FT	Fair Trade
E & M	Evaluation and Monitoring
FINE	A network of FLO, IFAT, NEWS and EFTA
Fairtrade	Registered trademark, used for FLO certified commodities
Fair Trade	A specific type of trading relationship, characterised by a long-term cooperative relationship between buyers and sellers
FLO	Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International
FF	Fairtrade Foundation
FTF	Fair Trade Federation
FTP	Fair Trade Producers (category in the survey)
FTO	Fair Trade Organization
HMP	Hand Made Paper
IFAT	International Fair Trade Association
IIED	International Institute for Environment & Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
LH	Life History
NEWS	Network of European World Shops
MAC	Market Access Centre (Traidcraft Exchange)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
Norad	The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRET	Natural Resources for Ethical Trade

NFTO	Northern Fair Trade Organization
NRI	Natural Resources Institute
OW	Other Women (category in the survey)
PMSA	Participatory Multi-Stakeholder Approaches
PSA	Participatory Social Auditing
RAs	Research Assistants
SFTO	Southern Fair Trade Organization
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
TDH	Terre des Homme, a Swiss NGO
VCA	Value Chain Analysis

Declaration

This thesis has been written by me, and the material has not been submitted for a degree at any University. The work reported has been done by myself, and all information cited is acknowledged at the appropriate point in the text.

Statement of Copyright

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Chapter 1 Introduction

> I like the concept – it is good that all over the world people are thinking about fair trade. We can learn from each other. We need to co-operate with each other, and share ideas. We should work together. It is trade, not aid. As a person I believe this. Aid is not so good, people get dependent. But what people want is work. They want work and then, pay them justly. (Interview 4, Marketing Manager, SFTO[1], Dhaka, December 2005)

1.1 Why is research into Fair Trade important?

This thesis will consider the impact of Fair Trade production on handicraft producers in Bangladesh. There has been little empirical research on the Fair Trade handicraft sector, and none located in Bangladesh. In addition the research is unusual in that it is conducted with the assistance of a Northern Fair Trade Organization (NFTO), Traidcraft plc, and four partner Southern Fair Trade Organizations (SFTOs), allowing for a rich investigation of the partnership processes at work, as well as providing opportunity to draw out Southern meanings and practices associated with Fair Trade.

1.1.1 A global concern

The Fair Trade[2] movement is a response to perceived inequalities and injustices in the global trading system, and is based on a philosophy that fairer trade, not aid, is needed so that poorer countries can prosper and manage their own development (Johnson and Sugden 2001). The sale of Fairtrade products has grown steadily by an average of 20% per year since 2000 (Fair Trade Advocacy Office 2006), as has the production of Fair Trade handicrafts and non-food items through registration with the International Fair Trade Association (IFAT). Through its alternative trading relationships, Fair Trade has tried to achieve both economic and social goals, on the basis that a fair wage and good working conditions can bring significant improvements to the lives of poor people. The Fair Trade Labelling Organization International (FLO) argues that Fair Trade can move producers from "a position of vulnerability to security and economic self- sufficiency" (FLO 2007:1), while IFAT states that Fair Trade "contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions and securing the rights of marginalized producers and workers"

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[1] Southern Fair Trade Organization

[2] Fair Trade refers to a specific trading relationship, the subject of this research. Fairtrade is a trademark for products that have been registered with the Fairtrade Labelling Organization International (FLO). The use of the term fair trade refers to a general critique of global trade, and would include ethical trade, trade justice campaigns, and other movements to make trade fairer, of which Fair Trade is one.

(IFAT 2007: 1). The Fair Trade movement is thus based on two related positions: fairer trade will help to reform the global trading system which disadvantages poorer countries, and fairer trade will bring advantages to individual producers and artisans. A review of these arguments, particularly with critiques of the second concern, is discussed in Chapter 2. My own position has been critical of the generalised negative critiques of those against Fair Trade (largely arguing the inevitable logic of free trade), while also questioning the generalised positive assumptions on impact by those involved in the movement.

Research on Fair Trade is often focused on reforming global trade, the concerns of consumers, and the moral philosophy of Fair Trade from a northern perspective, with a particular focus on Fair Trade partnerships and the relationship between NFTOs and SFTOs. There is an emergent literature on the impact on producers and developmental processes in producer countries, and though worthwhile, such studies have often been based on research with selected, small numbers of producers, or with Fair Trade Organizations (FTOs) who speak on behalf of their producers. There have been informative studies on the impact of Fair Trade, particularly in relation to commodities such as coffee, bananas, and tea. Little research, however, has been conducted on the large, diverse and complex handicraft sector, where production methods and relationships between artisans and organizations are so varied.

Topics of research	Examples of studies
Global Trade Moral Philosophy of Fair Trade	Goodman 2004, Hughes 2005b, Smith and Barrientos 2005, Raynolds, Murray et al, Eds. 2007, Zaccai 2007
Concerns of Northern Consumers	Gould 2003, Becchetti and Rosati 2004, Goodman 2004, Campbell 2005
Workings of Partnership	Tallontire 2000, Hopkins 2000a, Tiffen 2002, Taylor 2002, Scherer-Haynes 2007
Research on Commodities	Nigh 2002, Millford 2004, Bacon 2005, Calo and Wise 2005, Utting-Chamorro 2005, Taylor 2005
Research on Handicrafts	Littrell and Dickson 1999, Parrilli 2000, Biggs and Messerschmidt 2005, Randall 2005
Research on Poverty Reduction Developmental Impact	Morsello 2002, Becchetti and Costantino 2005, Poncelet 2005, Martin, Nelson et al 2006

Table 1.1 Examples of the growing literature on Fair Trade

1.1.2 The NFTO perspective: Traidcraft, handicrafts, and women

As one of the oldest Fair Trade buyers in the UK, Traidcraft, with its sister organization Traidcraft Exchange, are concerned not just to trade successfully, but also to achieve their social goals.

> Whilst 80% of our turnover is in food, 80 % of our challenges are with producing and selling crafts. But we are committed to the handicraft sector, because it often does involve very poor people without land, and also employs many women so we are able to work towards achieving our social goals of poverty reduction and the empowerment of producers. (Seminar, Director of International Development, Traidcraft, Gateshead, June 2006)

In spite of the many challenges, the company remains committed to selling crafts, and therefore, is particularly interested to discover more about the impact of Fair Trade on handicraft producers, and how accurate the claims made on behalf of the movement are.

Traidcraft was instrumental in organising an ESRC CASE[3] PhD partnership award between Durham University and Traidcraft plc. As the researcher, with several years' experience as a development practitioner and academic, as well as having an interest in Fair Trade as a social movement, I was involved in contributing to the design of the research. It was to focus on whether Fair Trade encourages development, how this happens, and what the factors are that support or limit the ability to achieve the social goals of Fair Trade. Traidcraft wanted the research to be undertaken in Bangladesh, where several SFTOs had been trading with Traidcraft for many years. The research considers four handicrafts: products made from jute, from terracotta, embroidered materials, and handmade paper (HMP) (See pictures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4). The vast majority of the producers of these handicrafts in Bangladesh are women, so the research inevitably centred on the experiences and aspirations of women producers in Bangladesh.

1.1.3 The SFTO perspective: Fair Trade in Bangladesh

The meaning and purpose of Fair Trade in Bangladesh is often linked to achieving equitable development within Bangladesh.

> What is Fair Trade – that is a good question, but it is also a hard question. We can see that in the commercial world – now, as it is, that the poor people are left out. They can hardly live their lives. The profits go to the middle men and to those that are already rich. The difference between the rich and the poor, it is heartbreaking, it is not right. It is not good for society to have such a large gap. A middle class society is better for the country. In Bangladesh, the ladies do so

[3] Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) CASE awards are intended to be an active partnership between a British University and another organization, where the PhD research can contribute to institutional policy and practice.

Picture 1.1 Jute producer group, Kallakair

Picture 1.2 Terracotta producer, Shariatpur

Picture 1.3 Embroidery producers, production centre, Patuakhali

Picture 1.4 HMP producers, HMP plant, Mymensingh

> many things, but they do not realise all that they do, they are not given the credit, only very bad pay, maybe one taka [less than a pence].... There should be justice, in paying a fair wage, but also there should be more equality between different people who work. (Interview 4, Marketing Manager, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005)

While staff at SFTOs are committed to the ideals of Fair Trade, there is less known about what is being achieved by and for the producers. It is also important to understand what producers want – what I refer to as 'good change' throughout the thesis.

> The women producers want to change their lifestyle, to improve their families, but there are many barriers.... The women want an income, because their husband's income is not enough and society makes pressure on them. But, they also want to make decisions about how to use the income... Before, they would hand over the money to their husbands or children, but now they are wanting a say.... It takes time. All over the world this is happening. The women know this from the media. They want change, but it will take time. (Education Officer, SFTO, Dhaka, November 2005)

Thus, Fair Trade can be seen to be working towards goals at many different levels: global (fairer trade and greater access for poorer countries to global markets), national (equitable development, less corruption), and the local and household levels (for individual women to have an income and to be more involved in family decisions).

1.1.4 The use of the term 'development' and other contested concepts

The social goals of Fair Trade are discussed around themes of fairness, equality, empowerment, and economic and social wellbeing. The processes to achieve (means) and the achievement of (ends) such changes are often termed 'development'. I appreciate that 'development' is contested, its use is problematic, and that there are many critiques of the policies and practices of development agents. In this thesis 'development' is used as a shorthand for several interlinked processes: reducing poverty, achieving 'good change'[4], and building sustainable institutions, capturing the intentional activity of a range of actors, such as SFTOs, companies, households, and individuals, to achieve the kinds of changes that are important to the Fair Trade movement.

It has been essential to understand how SFTOs define development, what their development goals are, and how they are striving to achieve them. In discussing

[4] The term 'good change' was originally used by Robert Chambers (1997) as a way of defining what people wanted from development. I am using the term with this meaning, informed by what producers and SFTOs describe as changes they would like to achieve.

development, there are other concepts, such as 'developing country', 'poverty', 'empowerment', and 'traditional' and 'modern' which are also contested, as is the use of 'North' and 'South' to indicate respectively, the rich world, and the often poorer, more marginalised parts of the globe. Many Bangladeshis also use these terms when discussing Fair Trade. I realise these are problematic concepts with many meanings and that their use can imply unequal power relationships. I define and discuss Fair Trade in section 2.1, development in Section 2.3, poverty in Sections 2.3.2 and 7.1, and empowerment in Sections 4.2 and 8.1.

1.2 The research questions

There are many questions that are being asked of Fair Trade. Consumers want to know if Fair Trade really is fairer and whether it brings significant benefits to producers. The staff at NFTOs want to know if producers are reaping the benefits of fairer trade. They spend their working lives "trying to change the power dynamics along the supply chain" (Seminar, Staff Member, Traidcraft, January 2007), and often rely on anecdotes and personal experiences to assess achievements. Staff at SFTOs are also keen to learn more about the impact of their programmes, and if there are things that could be done better. Thus, there are at least two important uses for the findings of this research: to inform consumers and staff in FTOs about the benefits and limitations of Fair Trade; and secondly, to share knowledge within Fair Trade organizations, so that institutional learning can improve practice.

The central focus of this research is to evaluate the impact of Fair Trade production on the handicraft sector in Bangladesh. During the research process, this focus was further broken down into several linked research questions:

- What are the understandings of Fair Trade and of development within SFTOs in Bangladesh, and what are the institutional practices that sustain these understandings? (Chapters 5 and 6)

- What is the contribution of Fair Trade to poverty reduction, and to the economic wellbeing of the producer and her family? (Chapter 7)

- What changes do women producers want, and does Fair Trade help them to achieve these changes? Can such 'good change' be considered empowerment? (Chapter 8)

- How do Fair Trade groups vary, and what are some of the important variables that influence the achievement of the social goals of Fair Trade? (Chapter 9)

The majority of my research was conducted in Bangladesh. While I received consent to do the research from the organizations studied and from individuals interviewed, I doubt that many people really understood the many ways that research findings, and their stories, can be used. A few people were worried about criticisms taken out of context that could harm them or their organization. I therefore use pseudonyms for the organizations in Bangladesh and for individuals such as staff members and producers

1.3 The structure of the thesis

1.3.1 The organising frameworks adopted in the thesis

The impact of Fair Trade is felt at several different levels and in different arenas - individual, household, community, institutional, and markets - and involves a combination of social and economic factors. To understand these effects I had to engage with literature on business practices and trade, development theory and practice, build an awareness of the social and cultural context of society, and grapple with the institutional practices of Fair Trade. One of the challenges of the research was bringing together insights from a range of academic disciplines.

I have adopted an innovative approach to the analysis of Fair Trade networks. While Value Chain Analysis (VCA) is the common method, the Circuit of Culture (du Gay, Hall et al 1997) has been used in this thesis to explore the inter-related and circular nature of power and meaning within Fair Trade networks by identifying aspects of identity, representation, production, consumption and regulation. This approach has been particularly helpful in analysing the various meanings, understandings and goals attached to Fair Trade, and to uncover the everyday practices of Fair Trade institutions. In addition, concepts from development practice applied to understandings of poverty, the household, gender,

livelihoods analysis, and empowerment, are used as a means of analysing the impact of Fair Trade production on the lives of producers and their families.

1.3.2 The chapters

The thesis has three sections. The first section provides the background to the research (Chapters 2, 3 and 4). The second section, combining literature and research findings, considers what Fair Trade is and means in this particular setting (Chapters 5 and 6). The third section represents the core of the research analysis, and comprises three empirical chapters that discuss the impacts of Fair Trade on standards of living and the variations in experience across research sites and through time (Chapters 7, 8 and 9).

Chapter 2, Situating Fair Trade, sets out the theoretical context of Fair Trade, the critiques and the current literature on impact and evaluation. The Cultural Circuit and concepts from development practice are introduced, with a review of their relevance to the research questions.

Chapter 3, Researching Fair Trade, gives an overview of the experience of doing research with Traidcraft and in Bangladesh, and of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies used.

Chapter 4, Bangladesh: the context of handicraft production, provides background on the country context, and introduces conceptual material on poverty, gender, empowerment, and livelihoods that will be drawn on in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Chapter 5, Meanings and representations of Fair Trade, combines primary and secondary material. Here I consider the meaning of Fair Trade in the North, and then move on to new material on meanings associated with Fair Trade in Bangladesh.

Chapter 6, Institutional practices: the production and regulation of Fair Trade, also combines theory and new research, giving context to the later empirical data, providing new insights into the way in which institutions, particularly SFTOs, define, guide, and assess the achievement of developmental goals.

Chapters 7, Fair Trade and poverty in Bangladesh, considers the 'fair wage' and other economic benefits to the producer. A comparison is made with other paid work opportunities, the relationship between Fair Trade production and other family livelihood strategies, and the extent to which poverty is reduced.

Chapter 8, Continuity and change: processes of change and empowerment, is largely based on empirical data but is informed by the earlier theoretical discussion on empowerment (Chapter 4). The chapter asks what women producers want – the changes and the continuities – and how Fair Trade production contributes to the achievement of these aspirations. A comparison is made between Fair Trade producers and other women, including those with other paid work.

Chapter 9, Different places, different stories, considers the ways in which culture, social structures, and geography play a role in mediating the impact of Fair Trade. It makes comparisons between different Fair Trade groups, using each of the eight research sites as an example of a particular contributory influence.

Chapter 10, Conclusions: "shades of grey....", draws my arguments together. A main concern is to show the multiple meanings of Fair Trade that have developed in Bangladesh independently and complementarily to the Northern approach. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 demonstrate significant advantages of Fair Trade for producers, but also highlight some limitations. These threads are drawn together in the conclusion.

Chapter 2 Situating Fair Trade

> The vast distances inherent in the global market hold potential for creating anonymity and loss of meaning among producers, marketers, and consumers. How the fair trade movement counters such dehumanizing anonymity through a system of compatible trade among artisans, retailers and consumers forms the substance for our analyses. (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 27-28).

2.1 Introduction

Fair Trade networks have developed particular types of Fair Trade Organizations (FTOs) and employ specific institutional practices as a means of contributing to their developmental goals of a reduction in poverty, the empowerment of producers and the building of sustainable producer organizations. This chapter reviews the current literature on alternative trades, including Fair Trade, drawing out lessons, limitations, and insights in order to locate my own research within a continually evolving 'history of Fair Trade', including a range of institutional settings and national and local contexts. Section 2.2 demonstrates the need for a critical analysis of the spaces and places of production "through detailed case studies (and) empirical work" (Goodman 2004: 910). In order to analyse the achievement of developmental goals, the following section, 2.3, introduces knowledge from development practice and concepts, such as a multi-dimensional understanding of poverty, a focus on households and livelihoods, the application of gender analysis, and theoretical writings on empowerment, that are applied in the analysis of my findings in Chapters 7, 8, and 9. The end of the chapter, Section 2.4, highlights the importance of institutional settings, and introduces the Circuit of Culture as an organizing framework for Chapters 5 (The Meanings of Fair Trade) and 6 (The Institutions of Fair Trade) in order to contextualise the broader discussions on development within the various meanings and social and cultural practices of specific SFTOs and NFTOs.

2.2 Research on ethical, Fair and organic Trades

There is a growing body of research on alternatives trades such as fair, ethical and organic trade, and an increase in evaluations done by FTOs. This section will consider such research, organised around topics that are central to my research, the achievement of the social goals of Fair Trade, and include compliance to codes of conduct, the partnership model, market issues, coffee production, development and poverty, and finally the research on handicrafts. Key issues and themes, such as gender and empowerment, are analysed, with links made to

the positioning of my own research. As stated in Chapter 1 (Section 1.1.1), my own position is critical of both generalised critiques of Fair Trade from the hegemonic position of global free trade, and generalised assumptions of positive impact based on value positions from within the Fair Trade movement. Analysis of previous research provides insights into the range of individual and institutional responses to fairer trade, and the variety of impacts, influences and outcomes of such trading activities.

2.2.1 Ethical Trade and compliance to international codes and standards

The Natural Resources Institute (NRI) at the University of Greenwich defines ethical trade as a concern with workplace issues, drawing on international codes of conduct, national legislation, and industry-wide initiatives to improve compliance and encourage best practice throughout the supply chain (NRI 2000). While some workers benefit from increased income and access to new markets and compliance to codes of conduct (Barrientos and Blowfield 2001), there is also concern expressed that women and casual workers often do not receive benefits (Hale and Opondo 2005). Compliance is usually driven by Northern interests, and has had little local ownership, and thus little enthusiasm within producing organizations to improve practice (Tallontire 1999, Barrientos and Blowfield 2001, Tallontire et al 2001). As a result of such critiques, participatory social auditing, where workers, Trades Unions and NGOs are involved in evaluating the social and environmental standards, is seen as a way forward (Barrientos and Blowfield 2001, Barrientos 2005). Hughes has also analysed the use of power along the supply chain on cut flowers in Africa (Hughes 2003), and in later work, offered three models for understanding the mode of ethical monitoring, the "arm's length approach, the coordinated approach and the developmental approach" (Hughes 2005a: 1145), supporting previous analysis to suggest that development does not just happen, but needs to be part of the model of intervention.

Recent research in Ethical Trade continues to place emphasis on multi-stakeholder approaches to compliance rather than the use of formal, top-down approaches (Tallontire, Dolan et al 2005). Drawing on case studies in Kenya (cut flowers), South Africa (fruit), and Zambia (flower and vegetables), the authors argue for bottom-up participation with the development of local initiatives to address concerns. Since multi-stakeholder approaches and local level decision-making take place within the context of cultural, gendered and economic norms that are driving the lack of representation (Tallontire, Dolan et al 2005:

569), more information is needed about how these norms are changing, if at all. It remains a challenge to include adequately producers and their organizations in real positions of power and influence. By using Participatory Social Auditing (PSA), Hale and Opondo uncovered issues important to the workers, as well as how compliance operated (Hale and Opondo 2005). They explicitly discuss the gendered nature of the economy, a concern stressed in another study of African horticulture (Tallontire et al 2005). A new initiative, the Horticultural Ethical Business Initiative (HEBI), has been established, partly as a result of research, as a means of improving local ownership towards compliance. However, many of the difficulties faced by workers, and their poor labour rights, are a direct result of downward pressure from supermarkets who control the supply chain. Participatory methodologies appear to have a role to play in uncovering the views of workers, and in establishing local organizations, but structural factors continue to have a significant influence, as do power relations outside the local, which require additional resources and mechanisms to address their damaging influence on workers' rights and conditions.

There is little direct attention paid to poverty alleviation in the Ethical Trade literature, which tends to emphasize supply chain relationships. A workshop run by DFID addressed the issue of assessing the impact of ethical trade on poverty. Positive benefits were associated with "strong community organizations" and "favourable trading terms" (DFID 2002). The sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) was offered as one means of analysing the impact of compliance to trading codes on poverty. The need for further research was recognised, "...it is important to challenge assumptions about the relationship between compliance with trading codes and the impacts of those trading codes on poverty" (DFID 2002: 6). However there was little agreement on how this should be done or who should do it, given that many retailers did not have the expertise to assess "broad and multi-dimensional aspects of the poverty eradication agenda" (DFID 2002: 6). A recent three year study (2002-2005) has focused on different dimensions of livelihoods in two areas, cut flowers in Kenya and wine production in South Africa (Nelson, Martin et al 2005, Martin, Nelson et al 2006), linking these dimensions to the impact of codes of practice. The study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies within a comparative approach, and found an association between the implementation of codes of conduct and better worker conditions and livelihoods (Martin, Nelson et al 2006), especially for permanent workers. Temporary, part-time, often female, workers achieved fewer benefits, and it was often hard

to give their concerns a voice (Nelson, Martin et al 2005). They were particularly concerned to make links with other organizations and to embed the research into on-going action.

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) UK provides a forum where issues can be discussed by a range of stakeholders (ETI 2005). Research done by ETI suggests that maintaining ethical sourcing (ETI 2004) is often based on the establishment of long-term relationships built on trust and better communication. The importance placed on such relationships has also come out of other studies within ethical trade (DFID 2002, Kanji 2004, Smith and Barrientos 2005). Smith and Barrientos (2005) argue that while Fair Trade's move to mainstreaming makes it more like ethical trade, stakeholders in ethical trade are questioning the attention to compliance alone, when a more development focused and holistic approach is necessary (Tallontire 1999, DFID 2002, Hale and Opondo 2005).

Many of the studies into Ethical Trade are unclear about the methodologies used, though reference is often made to qualitative approaches, participatory methods, case studies, and value chain analysis. It is stated that 'measuring impact' is difficult and complex, and it would appear the focus of most research has been on the nature of the relationships along the supply chain and how compliance can be improved. A summary of some of the issues raised is given in Table 2.1.

Benefits of Ethical/Fair Trade	Limitations and critiques	Recommendations
• Income and access to markets • Better conditions through compliance to codes of conduct • Capacity building with local institutions	• Partnerships need to be accountable and share commitment • Hard to judge impact • Challenge assumption that compliance leads to poverty reduction • Many different codes • Women and casual workers often not receiving benefits • Little local ownership	• Participatory Social Audits (PSA) • Participatory Multi-Stakeholder Approaches (PMSA) • Gender analysis and understanding of gendered economies • Possible convergence of Ethical and Fair Trade ? • Need for more developmental approach

Table 2.1 Important issues within literature on ethical trade

2.2.2 Institutional development and the nature of partnership

There have been a number of studies that focus on the nature of the partnership, and argue that the development of sustainable, local institutions can be one of the most important benefits of Fair Trade. In a case study of Cafédirect and the KNCU coffee co-operative in

Tanzania, Tallontire found weaknesses in the partnership model, arguing that attention needs to be put into making local institutions (SFTOs) and partners (NFTOs) more accountable (Tallontire 1999, 2000), and that effective partnerships are based on shared knowledge and particular ways of working together (see Table 2.2). She argues that while Fair Trade organizations do influence mainstream companies, it is also important to demonstrate – through research, impact assessments, and robust monitoring systems – why Fair Trade is successful and to hold it accountable to producers and consumers (Tallontire 2001).

Necessary conditions for partnerships	Structure for partnerships
Shared understanding	Shared time frame
Mutual commitment	Participation
Distinct contribution	Balance of responsibilities
Shared objectives	Clear boundaries
Trust	Autonomy of partners
	Accountability
	Transparency

Source: Tallontire 2000: 172

Table 2.2 Conditions and structure of successful partnerships

While stressing the value of new trading relationships in international business, there is concern about how to manage such partnerships (Renard 2002, Tiffen 2002). In a study on the Kuapa Kokoo cocoa co-operative in Ghana, Tiffen (2002) argues that partnership can be a good model for institutional development, providing start-up loans, training, and increased dignity for the producers, but one has to be aware of supporting "unsustainable co-operatives" and to avoid only working at the local level, as "development initiatives need to address the whole value chain" (Tiffen 2002: 394-395). Partnerships have been assessed in terms of different models of participation: beneficiaries, partners, or owners (Wright 2003), where Wright makes a distinction between consultation and representation, arguing that the Day Chocolate Company (partners with the Kuapa Kokoo co-operative) facilitates representation (rather than just consultation) since the producers are part-owners of the company.

The importance of the institutional support given in Fair Trade partnerships is also the focus of research done by Ronchi on Fairtrade coffee in Costa Rica. She argues that direct impacts to producers, the fair price and social premium, are important, but even more important are

the indirect benefits – those to the organizations, which then provide services to their members (Ronchi 2002: 3). This process of institution building is essential for reducing vulnerability, improving potential for empowerment, and continuing the provision of services to farmers (Ronchi 2002: 24-25).

> Fair Trade can be said to have accomplished its goal of improving the returns to small producers and positively affecting their quality of life and the health of the organizations that represent them locally, nationally and beyond. (Ronchi 2002: 25-26)

This study is often cited in reviews of Fair Trade (for example in Nicholls and Opal 2005) to suggest that Fair Trade generally provides both direct and indirect benefits to producers. However, there are a number of limitations to this study in terms of generalizing about impact on producers (See Box 5.2). It was conducted at three different levels (the exporting agency, the co-operatives, and individual farmers), but only interviewed a non- randomly selected group of 28 producers. They had a vested interest in maintaining the link with their Northern partner (Cafédirect) and were unlikely to jeopardise this link, which is a major problem with research done on Fair Trade partnerships. Interestingly, although producers noted achievements, "very few producers could recognise Fair Trade as the source of the improvements they acknowledged" (Ronchi 2002: 11). Another shortcoming, raised by Ronchi, was that the objectives to be achieved were defined by the Fair Trade movement, and not by the southern organizations, or producers themselves (Ronchi 2002: 25).

Millford also looks at institutional development within Fair Trade networks, where he found that the financial support of the Fair Trade system helped the co-operatives in the Chiapas region of Mexico to thrive, when under earlier attempts at rural development they had failed (Millford 2004). The higher price given for Fair Trade coffee, the low costs of certification, and the development of stable co-operatives, also helps to "cross-subsidise the transition to organic production" (Calo and Wise 2005), where the high cost of conversion is considerable and cannot be achieved without use of the Fairtrade premium.

Successes	Problems and limitations	Recommendations
• Influences the mainstream • Can be a good model • Enables services to be provided that producers need • Supports diversification of livelihoods • Links between Fairtrade and organic production	• Limited accountability to producers and consumers • Hard to manage partnerships • Consultation vs. representation in decision making • Generalizations based on small sample size	• Develop robust monitoring systems • Additional research is needed • More involvement of SFTOs in defining objectives

Table 2.3 Important issues in relationship to the partnership model

2.2.3 Research into coffee production and links to institutional development

The area of Fair Trade that has been most researched is coffee production. A review of the poverty alleviation impacts of Fairtrade coffee networks (Raynolds 2002a) concluded that impact is influenced by global and national policies, the organization and characteristics of the FTOs, and the individual characteristics of producers. Raynolds also raises the issue of the need for more research looking not just at income, but empowerment and organizational capacity as well. Case studies of Fairtrade coffee production in Nicaragua (Bacon 2004), Chiapas, Mexico (Millford 2004), and Mexico (Calo and Wise 2005) , suggest that Fair Trade networks can reduce vulnerability, but that niche markets need to expand in order to bring both more benefits and more producers into the networks. Millford argues that FLO registration helps the most successful coffee co-operatives (Millford 2004), and while monitoring standards are important, equally important is providing some means of support for farmers working towards achieving such standards. Bacon discusses the ways in which Fairtrade and organic networks (he does not distinguish between the impact of the two) can provide security and increased income, but do not offset the many factors leading to a general decline in quality of life for the farmers (Bacon 2005: 506).

A two-year programme of seven case studies on coffee co-operatives, five in Mexico, one in El Salvador, and one in Guatemala, conducted by Colorado State University (CSU), found that the benefits of Fairtrade to coffee farmers in Latin America were "both more significant and more complex than previously understood" (Murray, Raynolds et al 2006: 180), where the extra income and social premiums provide economic and social benefits to producers and their communities (Raynolds 2002, Nigh 2002). The co-operatives sell to Fairtrade, organic, specialty markets, and to conventional coffee buyers. Even so, they argue that

Fairtrade has provided traceable benefits to the coffee producers, for example in supplying important market information, credit, pre-financing and social premiums that support investment in quality and new technology, "firm evidence of the difference alternative markets can make for smallholder coffee growers" (Nigh 2002: 3). While the cost of Fairtrade certification is paid for by the buyer, organic certification is paid for by the producer "and requires a great deal of organizational support to monitor production conditions and maintain chain of custody" (Taylor 2002: 15), skills often learnt through involvement in Fairtrade production.

These studies provide interesting detail to the conventional claims made in Fair Trade studies. For example, while they found that Fair Trade did bring positive benefits to a range of stakeholder groups (Taylor 2002), they do distinguish between the benefits to leaders, to co-operatives as organizations, and to the wider community, as well as the different experiences of men and women . Fair Trade markets "subsidize a period of 'apprenticeship' in coffee marketing" (Taylor 2002: 5), allowing individual farmers to improve their practices. Women have made gains in being allowed to be members of co-operatives, rather than as leaders, and while gender equity is an explicit goal, it is because of pressure from international buyers and the Fair Trade movement, rather than as an "important internal issue" (Taylor 2002: 4). The leaders of the co-operatives tend to have more information, to develop additional skills, and to have contact with a greater range of people than individual farmers. The co-operatives are made stronger through visits, documentation and the rigours of the certification system.

> A number of studies find that the technical expertise and market information provided by Fair Trade networks is actually more important than the price premium. (Raynolds 2002a: 22)

However, there is criticism of the lack of producer involvement in FLO policy formation and in certification procedures. NFTOs are criticised for their lack of transparency, as SFTOs and co-operatives have to be open, answering many more questions than their northern partners. Convergence of the different certification systems would be a significant help to the farmers, as many criteria overlap and pursuing multiple certifications is expensive and time consuming.

Studies have shown that both Fair Trade and organic certification have a direct impact on 'first-level grower organizations'. Taylor argues that participation in Fair Trade networks has additional advantages, by encouraging the development of new secondary organizations based on "collaboration among producer organizations" (Taylor 2002: 8). Such second-level organizations include umbrella groups for co-operatives that lobby government, make representations on rural issues, and organizations that market Fairtrade coffee within Mexico:

> the impact of participation in Fair Trade networks, as opposed to other strategies, is that it seems to be particularly useful in fortifying second-level organizations – organizations that articulate several regional or community coops... (Nigh 2002: 4)

An interesting issue is the need for expert knowledge on coffee markets to inform decisions, with the desire for the widespread involvement of farmers who do not understand market mechanisms in the decision making process,. There is also the tension between "a Fair Trade system which requires participants to be democratically organized yet also involves buyers who explicitly prefer long term, stable relations with *individual persons* in supplying organizations" (Taylor 2002: 12). There is the "regular loss of institutional memory" as elected leaders leave office, and the process begins again of ordinary members, often with low levels of formal education, to understand and assimilate new information. Such tensions within organizational governance are not unique to Fair Trade, or to coffee co-operatives, but it is pertinent that these issues are raised. The lack of understanding of what Fair Trade is, not only in terms of market relationships but also the emphasis on co-operation along the supply chain by developing mutual organizations, is analysed by identifying three levels of understanding (Taylor 2002: 16): first, the relative lack of understanding amongst individual farmers, secondly, delegates to meetings and leaders who have more information on Fair Trade, and thirdly the elected leaders and technical advisors who have a sophisticated understanding of coffee markets. Problems identified are a lack of interest amongst farmers, who are mainly concerned with farm gate prices, the holding of information by officials, and lack of priority given to training and awareness-raising. Interestingly, producers appear to understand organic production because it is more "concrete" and because "it deals with their everyday activities while Fair Trade relations are handled mainly at the organizational level" (Taylor 2002: 4).

The coffee co-operatives are following a strategy of diversification, building on the security provided by Fair Trade to enter organic and specialty markets, while also supplying to mainstream buyers such as Starbucks and Carrefour. The co-operatives are also developing their own direct links with buyers outside Fair Trade networks. While there are risks and dangers involved in going outside the FLO system, where "large firms could green wash their non-Fair Trade coffee and eventually undermine the FLO system" (Taylor 2002: 10), it is essential for the co-operatives to diversify in order to survive. Many large coffee companies are now "implementing standards that are clearly based on organic and Fair Trade models" (Nigh 2002: 17). A second phase of the CSU research programme will investigate these new trends in diversification.

The range of studies on coffee production presents a complex picture of the processes of development within Fair Trade networks. While Fair Trade has brought significant positive benefits, it cannot, on its own, solve the complex problems of marginalized areas but should be seen as "part of a diversified strategy of development" (Taylor 2002: 18).

> ...the coffee producing zones coincide completely with the map of extreme poverty in the country, the regions defined by the State as requiring priority are the same that produce the coffee producer in Mexico. (CEPCO, Coffee Co-operative Report, cited in Taylor 2002: 18)

Benefits	Limitations and critiques	Recommendations
• Direct: income, community projects, dignity • Reduces vulnerability thorough support for diversification • Investment and improvements in quality • Indirect: institutional development • Information, technology, capacity building • Formation of second level organizations	• Problems with governance in co-operatives • Role of democratic decision making • Fairtrade income does not offset wider societal problems • Understandings of trade differentiated amongst various groups • Lack of involvement in, and accountability of FLO, less transparency of NFTO	• Continue capacity building with producer groups • Be more proactive on gender • Not much said about achieving empowerment • More research needed • Improve producer involvement in FLO • Fairtrade production should be part of a diversified strategy of development

Table 2.4 Important issues raised in research on coffee

2.2.4 Research on market relationships

Market issues are considered by Taylor, who compares Fairtrade coffee production with conservation of forests under Forest Stewardship Council Certification (FSC), both having

to make progress towards social goals, while being part of competitive markets, where they can "neither isolate themselves from mainstream markets nor abandon their alternative vision of the market" (Taylor 2005: 143). Murray, Raynolds et al (2006) also consider how to effectively manage economic and social goals while being part of a global capitalist system. In evaluating the nature of Fairtrade organic banana production, Shreck (2005) identifies the problem in terms of unequal power relations between producer organizations and the commercial importers, shippers, ripeners and retailers, suggesting that producers need to be more involved in decision making, to increase their understanding and to reduce what she sees as the top-down nature of the movement. Bunin's research on Fair and organic cotton, found that farmers adopted strategies to minimise the risk of diverse market relationships (Bunin 2001), and collaboration with government, agro-scientists and industry were essential for conversion to organic production.

The uneasy relationship with markets is the background to an ILO study by Redfern and Snedker, which argues that the success of the Fair Trade model, building on the private sector and embedding BDS within trading relationships, should be expanded to the 'mainstream', in order to scale up impact and improve the capacity to influence markets and government policy (Redfern and Snedker 2002). Considering access to markets as a route out of poverty, Page and Slater (2003) analysed a range of strategies intended to enable small producers to enter global markets. Rating the strategies against specific issues, long-term alternative trade companies received a higher score than any other strategy (such as AID programmes) with the exception of integrated foreign investment which scored the highest (Page and Slater 2003: 644-645). Macdonald's (2007) study of Fair Trade, Starbucks' CAFÉ Practices Programme and trade justice campaigns, found that such initiatives have contributed to "the empowerment of marginalised workers and producers in the global coffee industry" (Macdonald 2007: 793), particularly in gaining acceptance for improved practices and institutional capacity, but that such gains are often discrete steps within specific supply chains and more work needs to be done to build institutional models that will be able to consistently enforce positive outcomes.

Value chain analysis (VCA) is used by academics and FTOs to gain an understanding of supply chains, to discover where Fair Trade can intervene and have the most impact. Reforming the global system of trade remains a central concern of many in the Fair Trade

movement (Shreck 2002, Raynolds, Murray et al, Eds. 2007). The International Fair Trade Association (IFAT), European Fair Trade Association (EFTA) and the Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) commissioned three VCA analyses in 2005: handicrafts (discussed in section 2.2.6), cotton, and rice. Production is traced from the provision of raw materials, to the making and finishing of the product, to the middle men of buying companies (sometimes SFTOs), wholesalers, retailers and eventually to the consumer, including analysis of the growth or decline in sales, pricing and costing of goods, and profit margins. A distinction is made between *buyer driven* and *supplier driven chains,* where buyer driven chains are associated with labour intensive industries, and supplier chains with key producers, new technology, and workers that provide significant co-ordination and linkages across sectors (Traidcraft Market Access Centre 2005). Many products dealt with by Fair Trade are buyer driven. The *competence of the supplier* is often inversely associated with the intervention and control of the buyer: low competence equates with high control from the buyer. This relationship is often in flux within Fair Trade networks, since the preference for poor producers means that SFTO start off with low competence with considerable inputs from NFTOs, but through the partnership the SFTO will grow in competence, leading to less control by buyers. However, dependence on NFTOs has been cited as the most serious problem in the Fair Trade model (Hopkins 2000). "This dependency on NFTOs for access to international markets has meant that producers do not move up the value chain and therefore also remain poor" (Traidcraft MAC 2005: 28).

The VCA of cotton takes a global view of the cotton industry, analysing the various processes (from farming to manufacturing) and looks at a range of examples from different countries (Gent and Braithwaite 2005). Fair Trade is only a marginal player in the cotton industry, and the analysis suggests that Fair Trade networks could build producers' financial capital and improve the position of social values within markets generally because the governance of Fair Trade chains start with a 'social mission' (Gent and Braithwaite 2005: 8-10). They argue that "Fair Trade has recognised the livelihood issues facing cotton farmers and has developed a set of standards (FLO 2002)" (Gent and Braithwaite 2005: 16). However, if Fair Trade producers are to engage with the mass market, then production must move beyond working with small-scale producers, often organised through umbrella groups, to respond to the commercial demands of mainstream suppliers (Gent and

Braithwaite 2005: 23). Thus, one of the main market issues is how to continue to work with small producers, while meeting the quality, volume and time demands of large buyers.

The VCA on rice also takes a global perspective, and includes an evaluation of Fair Trade partnerships, in particular the Green Net rice project in Thailand. This research found that "social benefits appear to be the major achievement of the Fair Trade project" such as the creation of a learning environment, growing confidence and self esteem, with members of Fair Trade co-operatives having "significantly better opportunities than conventional farmers" (van Dooren 2005:122). Although the farmers felt more in control of the production process, there were still many problems: poor quality continued due to bad drying, lack of storage, and human failure; and transactions between Green Net and Claro (their Swiss buyer) should be more transparent. While involvement in Fair Trade "shortened the chain" it "does not necessarily give more income security" (van Dooren 2005: 110). The VCA highlights many of the problems associated with rice production generally, such as price volatility, the cycle of debt that farmers often face, the use of child labour, working conditions in mills, and the limited opportunities to achieve empowerment (van Dooren 2005: 121). Although Green Net is trying to promote gender equality, the situation continues to replicate inequalities in undervaluing the role of women in rice production, and paying little thought to the additional family responsibilities of women, and their lack of involvement in decision making.

> In light of the fact that 25 to 70% of rice production is carried out by women, further research on rice needs to be structured to deal with complex gender issues… they are paid less than men, or not at all and do not always participate in decision making. (van Dooren 2005: 124-125)

While VCA is good at analysing the production process, it is less useful for making judgements about impact on producers. This is because most information is from organizations – in particular NFTOs and SFTOs – who then speak on behalf of their workers and artisans. Obviously, SFTOs have a vested interest in stressing the successes and benefits to their workers and NFTO are also trying to show how they are different from mainstream business, and so tend to emphasize the positives. Sometimes it is not clear what the methodologies are, or who the researchers have consulted, though important issues, such as those above on women, are raised.

Successes	Problems and limitation	Recommendations
• VCA helps to show where FTO can intervene • Improvements in competence of the supplier • Social benefits such as confidence, self-esteem, and a learning environment • Increased income important to producers, as well as access to information	• Being in but not of the market • Role of global commercial businesses mitigate benefits of Fair Trade • Dependence of some SFTOs on NFTOs • Need to move from small scale to larger production units • Little opportunities for empowerment or to change gender inequalities • Not necessarily income security	• More in-depth comparative research, and more research at the level of the individual producers • Involve producers in decision making • Adopt better business practices and expand customer base • Collaboration with industry, scientists, and experts is essential

Table 2.5 Issues identified in research on markets

2.2.5 Studies on Fair Trade and development

One of the earliest studies on the benefits of environmentally and socially focused trade was carried out by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) on Fair Trade organic coffee from Venezuela and environmentally friendly pest management citrus fruit in South Africa (Robins, Roberts et al 2000). They found that there had been a significant impact, for example in strengthening social capital, trust, and self esteem, and that there was the potential to influence markets through influencing government policy. Unfortunately, it appeared that there was no guarantee that the premium paid was passed on to the community or workers. The need for building capacity within FTOs to manage systems for monitoring and evaluation, and to conduct rigorous research, including baseline data, was also identified as a necessary step forward, as impact was often based on anecdotal comment.

Two studies by development agencies, one by Oxfam and one by DFID, take rather different perspectives. A participatory study by Oxfam on the APECA coffee programme in Haiti found that many of the changes, such as greater access to food, more children in school, and greater gender equity, were linked to specific practices of the co-operatives and of the partnerships between the co-operatives (who produced for the Fair Trade market), the network of co-operatives, an intermediary NGO, and Oxfam GB (Villaseñor 2000: 8-12). These practices included control of income by women, improved membership and decision making within the co-operatives, access to credit, improved technology, making gender equity a specific goal, developing networks with other small producers, and having continuous monitoring and an annual participatory evaluation. The Department for

International Development (DFID) conducted case studies of coffee in Tanzania and cocoa in Ghana. They argue that as the amount of cocoa and coffee designated for Fair Trade retailers was only a fraction of their production, it was "meaningless to separate the impacts of Fair Trade from non-Fair Trade aspects of the producer organisation activities" (DFID 2000: vi). The most important impact of Fair Trade is on capacity building and trade facilitation. The report suggests that DFID should encourage capacity building in such areas as "governance arrangements of Fairtrade labelling systems", promote "new alliances with FTOs to influence policy reform at European and international levels", and support the exchange of information and experiences between FTOs and mainstream businesses, thus "improving the functioning of private trading systems emerging or expanding in the wake of market liberalisation" (DFID 2000: vii-viii). Both reports offer interesting insights, and each locates the main benefits of Fair Trade within their own institutional standpoint: Oxfam within its traditional role of supporting participatory local development, and DFID within its main focus on improving the function of markets as the central strategy for reducing poverty.

In a review of its involvement in Fair Trade, Oxfam commissioned an extensive study of 18 SFTOs. Significant benefits were identified, including improved income to producers, the adoption of business skills, better access to NGOs programmes and opportunities for new learning (Hopkins 2000a). The key factor in using improved skills and links to sustainable development was argued to be the active participation of producers, especially of women. Nevertheless, gender roles often remained unaffected. The report suggests that the provision of Business Development Services (BDS) was more important to producers than Oxfam acting as a retailer and buying the products (Hopkins 2000a). He argued that Fair Trade businesses were often not commercially viable, and that trade should be separated from development. As a result of this report Oxfam ended its involvement in Fair Trade production, concentrating its resources on its traditional role of supporting and managing local level development initiatives. A subsequent report by Redfern and Palmer (2000) argued that it was not Fair Trade, but the particular model adopted by Oxfam that was unsustainable, in particular costs were too high (supporting local Oxfam offices for example), and they did not work collaboratively with other organizations.

The continuing calls for more impact assessments, local studies, and robust monitoring systems were consolidated by a DFID report (Mayoux 2004) on how to do impact assessments for fair and ethical enterprises. This includes a range of issues and methodologies, but comes down firmly on the side of participatory assessments with a range of stakeholders. It considers five case studies of different approaches to impact assessment including ECOTA's stakeholder survey in Bangladesh (ECOTA 1998). Mayoux calls for the assessment of social, organizational and economic criteria, as well as keeping in mind the need for capacity building in FTOs to do their own monitoring. The issues of Fair Trade as a 'development project' have also been considered by Paul (2005), who discusses a range of evaluative methodologies for a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of Fair Trade. Drawing on a range of case studies on coffee and banana production, she argues that one of the main gains of Fair Trade is to enlarge market access for producers, and that the impact was strengthened where FTOs cooperated with NGOs (Paul 2005: 148-149).

There have also been studies that take a more negative view of the developmental impact of Fair Trade. Utting-Chamorro argues that there are limitations to the impact of Fair Trade on the lives of small coffee producers in Nicaragua because of the significant impact of institutional debt, a lack of government support, and volatile coffee prices (Utting-Chamorro 2005: 584). The co-operatives supply to Fairtrade, organic, specialist and commercial buyers. Individual farmers were paid less than the Fairtrade price because some of the higher price had to go to the co-operative to repay the debt inherited from the previous producer organization which went bankrupt in 1985 (Utting-Chamorro 2005: 589). Even with lower farm gate prices, the farmers did identify many good changes that had resulted from improved prices and greater security, and importantly Utting-Chamorro reports significant benefits on the five objectives of FLO: improved livelihoods, stronger producer organizations, rural community development, gender equity and environmental protection. However, there were still complaints about "the gender division of labour". (Utting-Chamorro 2005: 595), thought there is little discussion about how to address this. This critique suggests FTOs should get involved in traditional development activity, such as slowing the migration to cities through education, training, and associated activities for young people (Utting-Chamorro 2005: 597). How this type of activity is to be paid for, given that the co-operatives are in debt, is not addressed. The author concludes that the

benefits of Fair Trade are limited by wider societal problems, outside their control, but which FTOs should actively engage with.

There are some common themes that emerge from these studies: a number of benefits are identified (income, confidence, new knowledge, links to other organizations), but there is less achievement on gender equality. There are suggestions that FTOs and co-operatives should take on additional roles (monitoring and evaluation, traditional development activity, programmes on gender). The most consistent recommendation is for more research to be done. Many of the studies raise problems, but other than calling for more research are unclear about how to address the problems.

Successes	Problems and Limitations	Conclusions and Recommendations
• Increase in confidence, self esteem, • Potential for influencing government policies • More schooling, greater access to food • Improved incomes • Adopting business skills and acquiring new knowledge • Rural community development • Environmental protection	• Premium may not reach producers • Traditional gender roles not affected • Change at local level affected negatively by wider societal problems • Need to be more pro-active on gender issues	• Rigorous research, including baseline data • Continued capacity building with SFTO, particularly in monitoring and evaluation • Collaboration with NGOs and networks of Fair Trade co-operatives/producers • Encourage active participation of producers, and of women in particular • Participatory research with a range of stakeholders • More development activity

Table 2.6 Developmental issues raised in research into Fair Trade

Some studies (Morsello 2002, Becchetti and Costantino 2005, Poncelet 2005,) have looked specifically at the impact of Fair Trade on reducing poverty and its contribution to sustainable development. Morsello (2002) in her study of Brazil nut oil production through a partnership with the Body Shop, considered the effects of market integration on the Kayapo, an indigenous group in the Amazon, contrasting conventional and Fair Trade markets. Using a range of methodologies, she found that those people who had access to Fair Trade markets had more security, a better income, and less social differentiation than those associated with conventional markets. Such projects were so popular that many people moved to the villages that were involved in the Fair Trade production. However, she also found that there was little empowerment happening, and that handicraft production was seen

as one of the least desirable livelihood choices. She argues that when Fair Trade supports "collective and traditional practices" it is better able to deliver on its social goals.

Becchetti and Costantino use econometric analysis to compare four different groups of farmers in Kenya growing herbs. The groups were defined according to their association with Fair Trade networks, and he found significant differences between them. Affiliation with Fair Trade was associated with higher food consumption, lower child mortality, and significantly higher schooling (Becchetti and Costantino 2005: 1), and with "crop diversification, creation of an additional trade channel and higher price satisfaction" (Becchetti and Costantino 2005: 14). They argue that "Fair Trade works quite well", contributing to the wellbeing of farmers. They suggest that this methodology for impact analysis – a structured survey with a control sample, with descriptive and econometric analysis – should be used more widely, thus allowing for comparative analysis. While their research is thorough and better than many previous studies, it is weakened by a lack of gender analysis, where only men and their sons were part of the research.

Research done at The University of Liege (Belgium) considers Fair Trade in terms of sustainable development (Poncelet 2005), examining all stages of production and consumption, including a comparison of the Fair Trade approach to reducing poverty with that of traditional development projects. Using a stakeholder and institutional analysis they evaluate the 'Fair Trade project' on bananas in Costa Rica and Ghana, and coffee in Tanzania and Nicaragua, in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and relevance. They conclude that the impact of Fair Trade is "greatest and most easily identifiable in terms of human capital (knowledge, new know-how)...or social capital (networks, relationships)" (Poncelet 2005: 7), and is ambiguous on physical, natural and financial capital. The examples they give concern the financial situation of the co-operatives, so it is less clear what the implication is of a fair wage to the producers, though it is also claimed that the specific objective of improving the living conditions of small producers is achieved virtually everywhere (Poncelet 2005: 8). They found a "trend to apoliticism in the South" (Poncelet 2005: 8), in contrast to the highly political and advocacy nature of Fair Trade in the North. Examples given are access to membership of co-operatives and resistance to the formation of Trades Unions. They recommend activities to improve the understanding of trade issues and to encourage political activism, particularly in relation to working

conditions and the empowerment of women (Poncelet 2005: 11). It is not clear how widespread the trend to apoliticism is, or if it relates to certain countries or products.

Successes	Problems and imitations	Recommendations
• Increased income, security, less social differentiation • Higher food consumption, lower child mortality, more schooling • Crop diversification • Increase in human and social capital	• Little empowerment • Less obvious impact on financial, physical, and natural capital • Little achieved on gender issues	• Fair Trade should support collective and traditional practices • Increase understanding of trade issues and encourage political activism in the South • More work on gender

Table 2.7 Issues raised in relation to impact on poverty

2.2.6 Research on handicrafts

Fair Trade commodities such as coffee, bananas, sugar, and tea are usually produced in co-operatives, which have an organizational structure and receive a payment above the world price. Perhaps because of this organizational structure it has been easier to research such commodities, and there has been less research done on handicrafts and fashion items. One of the few studies from a business perspective, Randall (2005) argues that SFTOs involved in handicraft production need to develop better business practices, improve quality, and expand their customer base. The producers, most of whom are women, are not organised in co-operatives (though in Latin America this can be the case), and often work from home. Their relationship to the SFTO can be full or part time, and are like casual workers in that they do not have paid work unless there are orders, unlike commodities that still have to be harvested and can be sold to commercial buyers.

Handicrafts tend to be a buyer driven industry (Traidcraft MAC 2005: 27). The VCA on handicrafts suggests that, though insecure, Fair Trade usually provided a higher income than other possible activities. The higher income contributed to the improvement of physical and human capital, with the impact on social capital being the most difficult to assess (Traidcraft MAC 2005). Although an excellent report on the supply chain, the VCA on handicrafts is unsatisfactory as a study on impact. Many common sense views on impact are repeated in reports, for example, the "consensus that Fair Trade craft producers were able to meet their most basic needs for food, shelter, a minimum level of education for

children and access to health" (Traidcraft MAC 2005: 32). This judgement depends not only on what is meant by basic needs, but also on specific context. In Bangladesh it would be truer to say that Fair Trade producers are able to secure more of their basic needs. However, it is still quite common not to have enough food at certain times of the year, to withdraw daughters from education, and to be unable to afford health care. Another example is the statement that increased income has been used to buy goods and assets (Traidcraft MAC 2005: 36). An important question is how typical this is – how many producers can buy assets? The research, as with most VCA, was done primarily through organizations, and individual producers were not consulted. Being selective about individual stories and then generalising them to whole groups of producers leads to an overly positive interpretation of impact. Unfortunately, such statements, as in this study, are then reproduced in subsequent reports, leading to generalised claims about the impact of Fair Trade, as if it can be true in any circumstance.

> Research undertaken for a recent Value Chain Analysis shows that Fair Trade craft producers are able to meet their most basic needs for food, shelter, a minimum level of education for children and access to health. (Wills 2006: 155)

This general statement is drawn from a report that only consulted a limited number of SFTOs, not individual producers, and is indicative of a 'research problem' within Fair Trade, where the complexities of research findings are simplified in order to support advocacy campaigns.

Extensive research over six years was carried out by Littrell and Dickson (1999), including seven case studies of handicraft Fair Trade producer organizations in North America, Latin America, and India. They used a range of scholarly perspectives, and their work is distinguished by the attention to context, to the development of SFTOs, and their access to artisans. They highlight the range of institutions and institutional practices within Fair Trade (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 58-59), and consider both institutional development and impact on artisans.

> When asked, artisans provide a range of individual social, and cultural indicators for assessing performance, including acquiring transferable language, business, and computer skills; establishing credit; gaining independence and control over one's life; participating in organizational, community, and regional planning; preserving and elevating the stature of

> craft tradition; investing in community institutions; and reinforcing cultural identity. (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 37-38)

This is a more comprehensive list of indicators than is usually found in impact assessments. Impact is not only about an improved income and access to information and assets, but how it is possible to use these inputs and how their uses link to other processes of development and inclusion. When making their own judgements on impact, largely related to individual case studies, they suggest that artisans would generally answer that Fair Trade had fostered empowerment and improved the quality of their lives (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 302). Whether FTOs can offer a living wage is more debatable, even if it is above market rates and that paid by other buyers. They conclude that FTOs will need to "systematically monitor and collect quantitative data on business sustainability and on individual, household, and community impact" (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 303).

An interesting body of research has been produced by Fair Trade Assistance Holland (FTA) who with the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, has completed three case studies, two on handicrafts in Mexico and Thailand and one on coffee in Nicaragua. The purpose of the case studies was to analyse changes in the livelihoods of producers and "to measure to what extent these changes in livelihood can be attributed to interventions by trading partners and by Fair Trade" (Knorringa 2003: 3). The methodology contains two elements: sub sector analysis, considering the different channels that producers use to sell their products and a survey/interview with producer organizations who supply to both Fair Trade and conventional retailers. The sub-sector analysis worked well, but the questionnaire did not (Knorringa 2003: 11). Even though the methodology was weak, the report claims that quantitative impacts of Fair Trade are limited at best (income and working conditions), and that qualitative impacts (learning, confidence, and assistance to FTOs) are much more significant (Knorringa 203: 11). Most of the craftsmen and women produced for conventional trades and only a minority of production went through Fair Trade channels, where the conditions and prices given in Fair Trade were similar to those in the conventional channels. In Mexico, "the market channel that Fair Trade sponsors is not qualitatively different from other market channels... artisans do not recognise particular differences" (Parrilli 2000: 3, 13). This research was limited by the small number of craftsmen interviewed, the short period of time conducting the research, and insufficient attention paid to gender issues (Parrilli 2000). The conclusions also highlight the problem of

generalising about Fair Trade, as the relatively good working conditions and wages of artisans in Mexico (as observed in this study) would not necessarily be true in another country context.

In Thailand ceramics workers have a "considerably good livelihood in comparison to other types of work in the labour market" (Tiyapongpattana 2002: 23). Using the same methodologies, the study found it impossible to compare the effects of Fair Trade since only 15 of 232 producer organizations had links with Fair Trade, and of those that did, Fair Trade sales represented only a minority of their business (Tiyapongpattana 2002: 10). The pay and conditions were similar across all the companies, and government and other service providers provided business services. However, a role was identified for FTOs in providing services and market access for those micro and informal businesses that could not access local service providers (Tiyapongpattana 2002: 25). The research was only conducted with the owners of the companies, and other 'expert organizations' Unfortunately, many of the employers were 'reluctant' to give information, and often information was 'inadequate', and none of them were willing for their employees to be interviewed, thus little can be said about the impact on the artisans themselves. The limited impact attributed to FTOs could be related to the more mature economy in Thailand, the proactive role of government, and the development of a range of business service providers. However, this is not necessarily the situation in many other countries such as Bangladesh. This leads to the interesting question of what role Fair Trade should play in an expanding economy, and if this is different to the conventional one of supporting 'poor producers getting access to markets'.

Perhaps one of the most interesting approaches to assessing Fair Trade comes from Biggs and Messerschmidt concerning the hand made paper (HMP) industry in Nepal. They argue that the expanding HMP industry in Nepal is sustainable from economic, social, and environmental perspectives, and that such sustainability is supported by the traditional concern for community level development in Nepal, the application of Fair Trade codes of conduct, ideas of corporate social responsibility within HMP organizations, and the general policy and legal context within the country. The HMP industry in Nepal is they say a good example of 'positive deviance', where a range of actors are involved in promoting "something positive or better than average" and such good change is not the result of a "project, programme, or policy" (Biggs and Messerschmidt 2005: 1833), but is rooted in

Nepalese society, and "embedded in many of the long-held cultural values of Nepalese society" (Biggs and Messerschmidt 2005: 1838). Thus they claim that what is meant by Fair Trade can be seen as embedded in the perspectives and actions of local organizations, is sustainable, and offers 'positive change' because of its local and indigenous nature.

The research into handicrafts is problematic in assessing impact on producers because methodologies are often inadequate, and impact has been assessed largely by the institutions (FTOs) and not by the artisans. Some assessments are generalised and taken out of specific context. There is little analysis of gender, of households, or of how handicraft production influences other livelihood strategies. However, the studies by Littrell and Dickson (1999), Morsello (2002), and Biggs and Messerschmidt (2005) are richer in the contextual content and the nuances of impact in different locations.

Successes	Problems and limitations	Conclusions and Recommendations
• May support local cultures and traditional skills • Provides income to women • Fair Trade as an example of 'positive deviance' • Contributing to empowerment and a better quality of life	• Little impact in Mexico and Thailand • Simplifications of research findings, that are then generalised • Limited analysis of gender • Unclear if pay is a living wage	• Adopt a consistent methodology to assess impact so comparisons can be made • Provision of services and market access to micro businesses • Quantitative data on business sustainability and impact at different levels

Table 2.8 Issues raised in research on handicrafts

2.2.7 Conclusion: lessons from previous research

Summarizing such a range of studies and impact assessments is difficult as, inevitably, significant issues are left out. However, a number of important themes emerge.

- the importance placed on the role of partnerships, and capacity building of SFTOs
- the achievement of a range of benefits, though disagreement exists on the relative importance of financial benefits (income, premiums, paid work in difficult locations), and social benefits (confidence, self-esteem, dignity)
- two problematic areas are gender equality and empowerment, where most studies suggest that little is achieved
- raising issues, problems, limitations without sufficient attention to how to address them

Similarly, outstanding research challenges emerge,

- limited convincing research, because of inadequate methodologies and small samples, with many calls for more research to be done
- the difficulties of doing critical research within a 'partnership' paradigm where being negative can have harmful implications for future relationships
- making statements on the basis of studies in particular circumstances, as if the 'impacts' can be claimed for Fair Trade generally

These issues, with references, are summarised in Appendix 2 with selected studies cited on ethical trade, coffee, and Fair Trade. There are many useful insights from previous research, and while the relationships between NFTOs and SFTOs is often analysed, less is known about the relationship between SFTOs and their producers. Not enough research has been done at the level of individual artisans and how Fair Trade compares to other livelihood options and the various strategies at a household level. Artisans and producers need to be more involved in identifying change and what is important to them, rather than impact assessments being driven by the need to justify the Fair Trade model of doing business. Thus, research into Fair Trade would benefit from:

- direct access to larger numbers of producers, particularly at their homes (Littrell and Dickson 1999, Morsello 2002)
- a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Nelson, Martin et al 2005)
- research with others who are not involved in Fair Trade (Becchetti and Costantino 2005)
- awareness of the wider institutional context (Taylor 2002, Biggs and Messerschmidt 2005) and of other livelihood options
- application of theoretical insights and practical frameworks on gender
- a more sophisticated analysis of both disempowerment and processes of empowerment

2.3 Analysing Fair Trade in terms of development

Bringing in concepts and theoretical discussions from development studies is a way of approaching some of the limitations identified in the discussion in Section 2.2. Development is a contested concept and can be viewed in many different ways. It is often used by economists to mean economic growth, the development of a modern industrial sector with improvements in productivity and the creation of wealth. Development can also be defined as political, for example in terms of freedom, where the "expansion of freedom is

both (1) the primary end, and (2) the principal means of development" (Sen 1999: 36). Or, it can be seen largely in terms of natural resources, sustainability, and where the livelihoods of the poor are given priority within a framework that recognises international structures (Redclift 1987: 36). The previous section reviewed a range of studies on Fair Trade production, and while insights have been highlighted, the limitations of the studies have also been raised. In this section concepts from the practice of development are discussed as a means to improve the assessment of the multiple impacts of Fair Trade activity.

The human condition	Capabilities, deprivation, entitlement, livelihood, poverty, vulnerability, well-being
Organization, power, and relationship	Accountability, consumer, decentralization, empowerment, ownership, participation, partnership, process, stakeholder, transparency
Domains and dimensions	Civil society, environment, globalization, governance, market
Values	Democracy, diversity, equity, gender, human rights, pluralism, sustainability

Source: Chambers 2005: 187

Table 2.9 Development vocabularies

Chambers (2005) offers a chart of common words used to describe development (Table 2.9). This thesis will draw on many of the words suggested by Chambers as part of the discourse of development, and will draw on two additional sources for the meaning of development. First, consideration will be given to how FTOs define development and the institutional practices they employ to achieve developmental goals. Secondly, the handicraft producers in Bangladesh, most of whom are women, are asked to describe the changes they would like to see in their lives, and such ideas of 'good change' can be interpreted as their view of positive development.

2.3.1 Fair Trade and development theory and practice

Most of the literature produced by Fair Trade organizations does not refer explicitly to development discourse or to debates within development. The links between Fair Trade enterprises and partnerships on the one hand, and poverty reduction, empowerment, and the development of sustainable livelihoods on the other, are often assumed or taken as self-evidently moving in those directions. However, *the practice* of Fair Trade has been influenced by trends in development thinking, and increasingly the achievement of development goals is integrated into their trade activity (EFTA 2003, Traidcraft 2003b, Fair

Trade Advocacy Office 2006). Except for studies on co-operatives, the private sector and socially responsible business initiatives are often ignored in development studies (Thomas 2000: Nederveen Pieterse 2001) , although the Fair Trade movement has recently been used as an example of collective social activity in textbooks on development (Power 2003, Willis 2005).

Intentional development has evolved in terms of theory and practice, as it is both embedded in dominant economic and political discourses at particular times, and a reaction to such structural constraints. The 1950s and 60s were marked by structuralist interventions through state-led planning; the 1970s saw increased attention to the provision of basic needs and local level projects; while the 1980s and 1990s were characterised by macro-economic planning based on neo-liberal economics (Singer 1989, Thomas 2000, Eade and Ligteringen 2001). The perceived failures and limited success of all models has led to more diversity in approach, now focusing on synergy between state-market-civil society, with renewed attention to governance and rights-based approaches (World Bank 1992, Hulme and Edwards 1997, Evans and Moore 1998, World Bank 2001, 2005a). Fair Trade initiatives started in the 1970s, and, reflecting the ethos of the time, were concerned with poverty and basic needs, and have withstood the dominant neo-liberal ideology of the 80s and 90s (Barrett Brown 1993). There has long been a debate about the relationship between economic growth (the primary focus of economic development and later neo-liberal strategies), human development (the focus of organizations such as UNDP, the NGO sector, and some governments) and trade as a means of achieving different kinds of development. Fair Trade sees trade as a necessary part of growth, but considers that trade on its own will not achieve human development and the reduction of poverty without changes in global trading rules (EFTA 2003). It is a development strategy that attempts to improve the situation of poor producers by providing business skills, training and market access as part of the trading relationship.

Fair Traders have not been overly concerned about theoretical debates[2] within development studies, and have instead based their actions on a particular set of values. Some of the

[2] See: Nederveen Pieterse 2001, for a discussion of equity with growth, the cultural turn, alternative development, post-colonial perspectives, and post-development: and Blunt and Willis (2000) for Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism, and post-colonial perspectives

solidarity movements would take support from dependency theory, and recent concern for mainstreaming and accountable regulation of markets places Fair Trade within a broadly structuralist perspective. Fair Trade is primarily a market strategy, which looks to successful business initiatives and profitability, and supports the improvement, not the replacement of, capitalist markets (Raistrick 2001, EFTA 2003, IFAT 2003). With its emphasis on global networks and export markets, Fair Trade would not fit into the alternative school of development which favours small scale, locally based development (Korten 1995), though it would place more importance on producer perspectives than conventional trade. More recent critiques of intentional development from the post-structuralists and post-development schools (Lehmann 1997, Blunt and Willis 2000) have been limited in their applicability to either Fair Traders or development practitioners. Yet there are links between Fair Trade and some of the concerns of the post-development school, in particular Fair Trade's concern to bring the voice and experience of producers to the forefront of trading relations. This seeks to address a main concern of post-development, namely the dominance of a Northern perspective in development discourse and the need to see the contested nature of what is defined as a problem, and the ways in which such problems are addressed.

2.3.2 Definitions and measurements of poverty

There are a variety of ways of both defining and measuring poverty, often reflecting different positions within the social sciences, and the viewpoint of particular institutions. Economists tend to associate poverty primarily with income and measure poverty through income/consumption data and the use of poverty lines. Development practitioners have a complex and multidimensional understanding of poverty, one which includes not just income poverty but also access to services, the limitations imposed by power relations, the workings of social networks, vulnerability and the ability to withstand shocks. The UNDP refers to poverty not as a state, but as a process, as a dynamic phenomenon that is reproduced over time (UNDP 2003). Sen's capability approach analyses poverty in terms of endowments (assets and personal attributes) and entitlements (relationships which establish access to satisfy needs and wants), and considers the actions and inputs that are necessary to improve the capabilities of the poor (Sen 1999).

Fair Trade is constructed as working with the personal attributes of the poor and, through supportive economic and social relationships, improving their access to markets in order to

increase their capacity to satisfy their needs (Belshaw 2001). Thus, Sen's approach is particularly relevant, in that the purpose of the movement is to improve the capacities of the poor, by both increasing their personal endowments, and improving their entitlements to market relationships. However, benefits cannot be assumed, and attention to risk and vulnerabilities is also important (Bird and Snedker 2002). Many studies have focused on direct economic benefits and access to assets (Section 2.3), but there has also been an attempt to highlight other social and indirect benefits. An important distinction is between chronic poverty, a permanent condition, and transitional poverty, where people fall in and out of poverty as a result of shocks or changes in consumption and/or policies, with different policies being appropriate to different types of poverty (Dercon and Krishnan 2000, Maluccio, Haddad et al 2000). A range of typologies on poverty were investigated that related specifically to Fair Trade or Bangladesh (ECOTA 1998, Roche 1999, Narayan 2000, DFID 2002, Wilson 2004, Mayoux 2004). I have drawn on the categories identified by BRAC[5] (Roche 1999) that were used in Bangladesh as particularly relevant to my study, (material wealth, social wellbeing, and political capital measures), and also drew on the indicators identified by Mayoux. Chapters 4 and 7 include more detailed analysis of the particulars of poverty in Bangladesh.

2.3.3 Taking gender seriously

Development interventions by states, NGOs, and community-based organizations have been primarily constructed from a male worldview (Momsen and Townsend 1987, Momsen 1991, Kabeer 1994a). Women have been constrained in their ability to gain from development by accepted gender roles, capitalist social relations, and the patriarchal power of men over women (Momsen and Townsend 1987). These insights led to Women in Development (WID), an attempt to bring women's concerns and experience into development (Boserup 1970), and later Gender and Development (GAD), an approach that applies a gender analysis to all development activity (Kabeer 1994a, 1999). While the rhetoric of gender analysis exceeds the practical application of the approach (Wallace, Crowther et al 1997), attention to gender differentiation has influenced both development projects and Fair Trade partnerships. Organizations such as Oxfam, Christian Aid, and Traidcraft have identified women as often the most marginalized of the poor, and found that

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[5] BRAC refers to the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, an extensive national NGO with many different programmes in Bangladesh.

helping women often leads to a greater impact on the welfare of the household. However, many of the impact assessments (Section 2.3) have identified limitations in understanding the situation faced by women, and their continued inability to gain equal benefits from Fair Trade activity. It is necessary to interrogate the differing patterns of work, labour, power and benefits (Beneria 1982a, Beneria 2003, Lemire, Pearson et al 2001) for women in an analysis of the impact of Fair Trade on handicraft producers.

Attention to the social, physical, economic and political wellbeing of the poor, and women in particular, has often been subsumed under the concept of 'empowerment'. A definition drawn from Asian research describes empowerment as "the ability to make decisions and affect outcomes of importance... control over their own lives and resources" (Santillán, Schuler et al 2004: 535). Development agents are encouraged to consider both the practical and strategic needs of women (Moser 1989), and "to ground the conceptualization of empowerment in an understanding of the relationships of dependence, interdependence, and autonomy which characterize gender relations in different cultures" (Kabeer 2000: 80).

The empowerment of the poor and of women is an important aspect of Fair Trade (Mayoux 2003, Fair Trade Advocacy Office 2006, Wach 2006). However, to measure claims about empowerment and changes in the empowerment of individuals is not easy. The micro-finance literature (Hunt and Kasynathan 2001, Kabeer 2001, Sharif 2003, Izugbara 2004) has identified indicators and ways of exploring empowerment; some of which emphasize the process and often are positive on empowerment goals, and others which are more concerned about outcomes and are more negative about gains made by women (Kabeer 2001). There is a growing literature from within South Asia and Bangladesh on women and empowerment (Amin 1997, Chowdhury 2001, Ahmed and Bould 2004, Baruah 2004, Kabeer and Mahmud 2004a, Azim 2005, Bhasin 2005, Hossain 2005, Kabeer 2005). This literature will be used as a theoretical context to understanding what Bangladeshi women want, how such change is and may be achieved, and how Fair Trade production interacts and influences such changes. Theoretical debates on empowerment are summarised in Chapter 4, locating these within an Asian context and the cultural and social realities of Bangladeshi handicraft producers (Section 4.2), and in Chapter 8 (Section 8.1) where discourses on empowerment within Fair Trade are used as an introduction to the analysis of my data on change, continuities and the potential for empowerment.

2.3.4 The household – the site of production and consumption

Traditionally the sites of development have been *the state,* through macro-scale planning and service delivery, *organizations*, through donor, state and multilateral approaches, and *the community*, through NGO and CBO activity. Development strategies based on economic growth privilege the sites *of production*. More recently (Marston 2000) the household has been analysed as an important site of development, where power is exercised and decisions are made. Studies have explored "the unevenness of people's experiences within the household" (Redcliffe and Whatmore 1990: 183). While the application of the concept of household is problematic (Saradomani 1992) when applied to a range of household types, it nevertheless serves to focus our attention on the unequal distribution of work, status and power within a family. It is necessary to consider consumption patterns and exchange relations, supporting the household as an essential site of analysis (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: Chapter 5) when assessing the impact of development initiatives. The household is also where decisions about handling risks are taken, "an arena of bargaining and contestation" (Agarwal 1994: 55) which often affect men and women differently. Much of the production for Fair Trade handicrafts is either within the household or with groups that meet near their households, and the productive work (on handicrafts) is intimately integrated with the tasks of reproductive and social production (Singerman and Hoodfar 1996, Kantor 2003, Pearson 2004).

The making of handicrafts, seen as part of household duties, takes place within the conservative and patriarchal relationships of the home. Production within the household is often invisible (Pearson 2004), with little status since it is linked so closely to household duties and often seen as being done in the 'leisure time' of women. Difficulties and problems such as poor lighting, distractions and unhealthy practices, are often hidden and not improved, since the woman is working by herself and has no one to discuss her working conditions with. In Bangladesh, women are further constrained by purdah, which confines them to their own courtyard or house (Amin 1997).

It is not possible to consider the advantages and disadvantages of handicraft production unless one also considers how the household operates, how Fair Trade production relates to social reproduction activities and consumption within the family, and how Fair Trade employment might be changing relationships within the household. Ideas around labour,

consumption, and contact with the public world, influence what women see as possible, the strategies that they adopt to manage change, and the changes that they are looking for (Kabeer 1997). Attention to the household as a site of development and change will be one of the perspectives adopted in Chapters 7, 8, and 9.

2.3.5 Applying a livelihoods perspective

A framework for including the various issues and concepts from development is a livelihood perspective, where the capabilities, opportunities and risks experienced at the household level are considered, asking what range of strategies are developed to improve and maintain the family. Individual and family economic behaviour is seen within the context of social relationships, political institutions, and cultural norms. There have been criticisms of the livelihoods approach: that insufficient attention is given to the role of markets and the influence of new technologies (Dorward, Poole et al 2003); that it can lead to the de-politicization of poverty (Bebbington 2004): that the use of power and means of decision making are often under-represented and thus, a sense of the dynamic of development is often lost (de Haan and Zoomers 2005).

However, a livelihood approach has much to recommend it in a consideration of the impact of Fair Trade. It puts the poor and effects on them at the centre of the analysis, and it re-affirms that different groups and individuals experience poverty in a variety of ways, that poverty is culturally specific with its own physical and social geography. The approach also observes the influences and linkages between different levels: the household, family and community, to the influences from the region and the state, to the demands from global markets. A language has grown up around its use: capabilities, different types of capital (including human, social, physical, financial), coping strategies, risk, security, and vulnerability (de Haan and Zoomers 2005), and such language has been used in some of the previous impact assessments (Poncelet 2005, Traidcraft MAC 2005). It is also a framework which is able to capture both economic and social goals, taking a "holistic analysis" (Bird and Snedker 2002: 6), and has been used to evaluate initiatives from both the private sector and voluntary groups (Barney 2003, Hinshelwood 2003) Chapters 7, 8 and 9 will apply concepts from a livelihood perspective, considering both the opportunities and the risks and limitations of Fair Trade employment as experienced by producers and their families.

Social capital is one aspect of the livelihoods approach which has been acknowledged in studies on the impact of Fair Trade. The development of social capital is seen as important at an institutional level: one of the criteria of success is the extent to which social capital (trust and the ability to form networks and alliances) is developed within partnerships, and as part of capacity building with SFTOs (Robins, Robert 2000, Poncelet 2005). Renard (2002) describes the partnerships within Fair Trade as the social capital of the movement, which then creates the economic capital. However, improvements in social capital are also relevant to the gains made by individual producers, and this issue has received less attention and is, moreover, difficult to assess (Traidcraft MAC 2005). Improvements in social capital are considered to have a significant effect on the ability to diversify livelihoods and to improve the economic and social wellbeing of the household (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000, Blair 2005, Sen and Hume 2005). My research with producers illuminates the ways in which the opportunity for new experiences (Section 7.3 and 7.4) and involvement in group activities (Section 8.2.6) contributes to the growth of new social networks for many women and improves the possibilities for new livelihood strategies.

2.3.6 Valuing different types of knowledge

Various writers from within development (Chambers 1997) and also from post-colonial discourse have identified the pervasive nature of colonial, Northern, and elite voices in development. Many NGOs in particular have struggled to find meaningful ways of involving the poor on an equal footing in the planning and implementation of development initiatives (Roche 1999), with many multilateral and bilateral agencies such as the World Bank and DFID (Narayan 2000, 2002) using various participatory methodologies in an effort to bring the knowledge of the poor into development planning and implementation. The desire for the participation of the poor has been accompanied by a complementary discourse on the value of local or indigenous knowledge, and the perceived tension between local and outside knowledge. This is an important critique and re-focuses attention on relevant sources of knowledge. However, there is a danger in romanticising local knowledge and over-stating the separation of 'the local' and 'outside' influences (Cooke and Kothari, 2002). The local is not always altruistic and is a site of stratification with complex uses of power and influence (Nederveen Pieterse 2001).

Fair Trade partnerships contribute to the fluid and changing nature of knowledge, where hybrid knowledge is developed from a range of sources and encounters, with a mix of local, national and global ideas and experiences. The changes in the lives of women handicraft producers, that are partially a result of Fair Trade employment, have to be negotiated within the context of conservative, unequal and limited expectations of women enforced by household and community norms. New attitudes and practices as a result of being a Fair trade producer (FTP) can be resisted and seen as misguided by more traditional forces. Producers are affected by global trends and demands for quality: their own traditional skills and ideas of design effect global products. SFTOs manage this process. It will be equally important to understand the extent and ways in which the knowledge, experience, and aspirations of SFTOs and the individual producers are incorporated, or not, into the long-term partnerships and into the meanings of Fair Trade.

2.4 Analyzing Fair Trade institutions and partnerships

The foregoing discussion has drawn out insights from previous and current research into alternative trades, and reviewed concepts from development as a way of further analyzing the impact of Fair Trade on producers. One of the seminal understandings from this discussion is that Fair Trade, and development activity, is always emdedded in specific institutional practices and meanings, and organizations are instrumental in defining and delivering social and economic objectives. Thus, an understanding of the impact of Fair Trade must begin with an understanding of the institutional setting and of how FTOs define and achieve what they see as development. In these processes, there is a continuous link between what organizations are doing, and how they see themselves as part of the wider, global movement to achieve fairer trade.

While Fair Trade is primarily constructed as an economic activity it should be understood in a much wider sense as a cultural and social activity that incorporates a range of meanings and values and is underpinned by explicitly constructed social relationships. The Circuit of Culture is a useful framework for bringing the cultural and the economic together, and for showing the ways in which Fair Trade as a movement interacts with Fair Trade as a trading strategy (Figure 2.1). The Circuit of Culture (du Gay 2000) focuses on five sites where culture, power and knowledge meet: identity, representation, production, consumption and regulation. Different meanings and practices are created and maintained at each of the sites,

and each site influences, and is influenced by, the processes created at each of the other sites. It specifically deals with power relations (regulation), and embeds production and consumption within their cultural and social contexts (du Gay, Hall et al 1997), revealing how trade, and judgments about trade and economic activity, are always part of a specific geography, a specific culture and way of thinking.

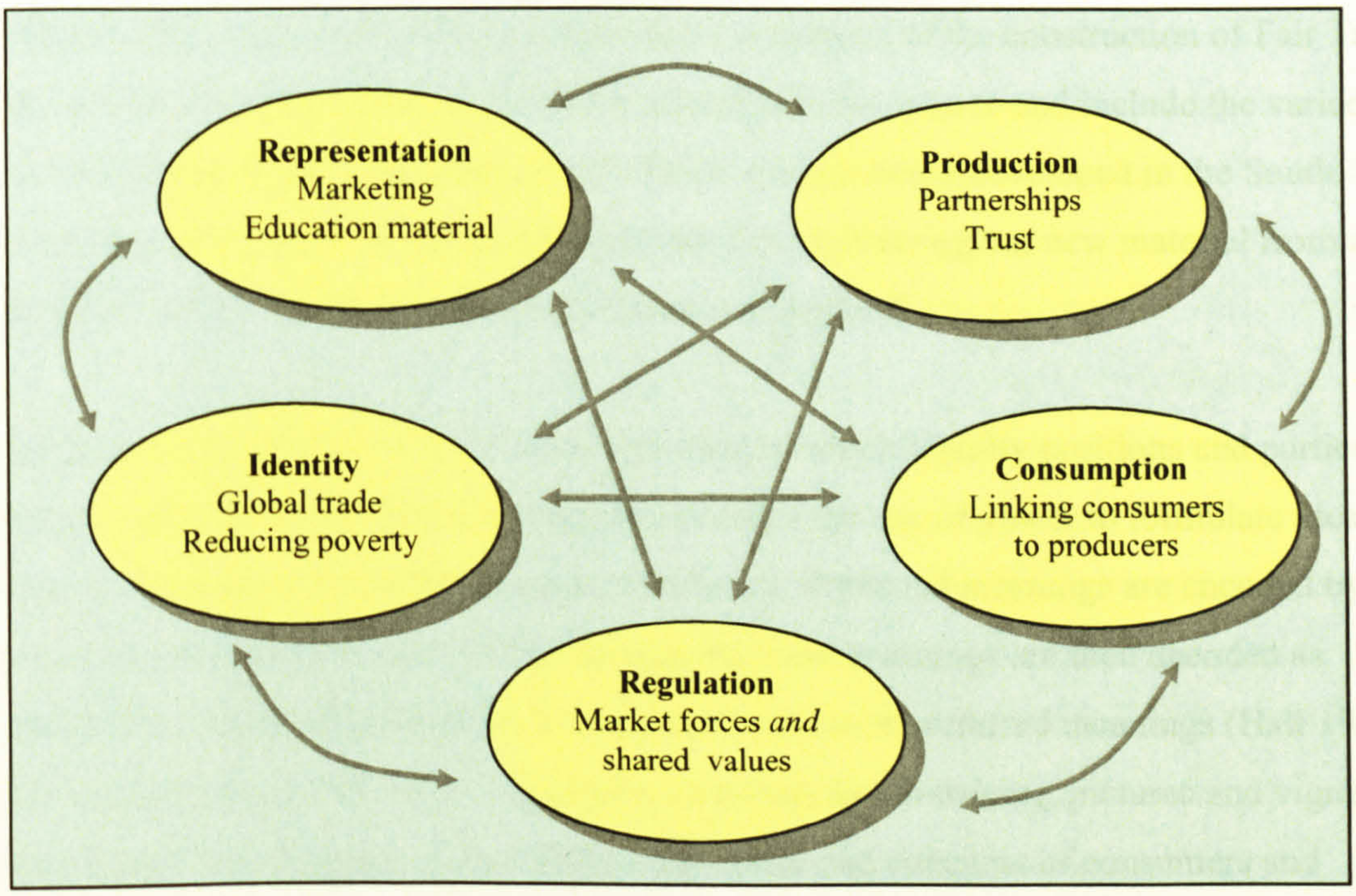

Figure 2.1 The Circuit of Culture applied to Fair Trade.

The continual creation of meanings and practices contributes to the construction of what Fair Trade 'is' and what it is evolving to be. See Appendix 1 for a more detailed chart. .Applying the Circuit of Culture as an organizing device helps us to unpick "the power of abstract models of economic behaviour [which] continue to shape the ways in which we both understand the economy, and significantly, the ways in which the economy functions" (Crewe 2003: 358).

2.4.1 A brief exploration of Fair Trade

The social movement of Fair Trade creates many new *identity positions* (Figure 2.1), and we recognize ourselves in the identity or choose to extend our identity, the 'routes' by which people become (Hall 1999). Such identities can be based on a political philosophy, as in the solidarity campaigns with coffee producers in Latin America (Littrell and Dickson

1999: 16), or on religion, as is the case with Traidcraft, a "response that is rooted in a Christian worldview that refuses to accept that in the market the only categories are winners and losers" (Johnson and Sugden 2001: 9). Less is known about the identity positions and the meanings associated with Fair Trade from the perspective of producers and Southern Fair Trade organizations, SFTOs. Several studies have shown that producers often have a limited understanding of the realities of global trade (Hopkins 2000a, Poncelet 2005, Murray, Raynolds et al 2006), an important component of the construction of Fair Trade in the North. However, those in the North should also be open to and include the varied and complementary understandings of Fair Trade that are being developed in the South. The meanings and identities associated with Fair Trade, drawing out new material from a Southern perspective, are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Representation (Figure 2.1) refers to the ways in which identity positions and particular meanings are communicated and always includes the use of power to formulate ideas and to use various forms of communication effectively. Preferred meanings are encoded by manufacturers and by cultural intermediators; these meanings are then decoded as individuals interrogate, negotiate, and sometimes resist preferred meanings (Hall 1997). The representations of Fair Trade, through such means as advertising, pictures and vignettes in brochures, and company reports, stress the values and concerns of consumers and producers, a political act in a shared moral economy (Goodman 2004), as well as attempting to explain the difference between Fair Trade Organizations (FTOs) and other commercial businesses. Consumers will only continue to buy Fair Trade products, and staff in FTOs remain loyal to the movement, if they are convinced that the products are produced under better conditions and producers do achieve significant benefits. Thus, representations must also be 'truthful', convey often complex messages, and increasingly be based on 'evidence' from studies and analysis of impact. The representation of Fair Trade is discussed further in Chapter 5, raising the difficulties in using promotional materials as sources for information on impact, and in Chapter 8 where representations of the achievement of 'empowerment' are discussed.

The link between the *consumer* (Figure 2.1) and the producer is central to the conceptualization of Fair Trade, a concern with the effects of trade on the producers (Traidcraft 2003a). *Consumption* of Fair Trade products gives an opportunity for active,

considered consumption where "people are continually guided by moral and social issues in their economic activity... and the relation between everyday economic activity and broader social concerns" (Lunt and Livingston, cited in Newholm 1999: 174). Most studies on ethical consumption are broadly positive about the possibility of changing consumption practices through increased knowledge (Tallontire 2000, Korthals 2001, Jones et al 2003). For example, Shaw (2000) showed that consumer behaviour was often based on broader concerns and not just on price or self-interest. Raynolds agues that short supply chains and producer information can humanize the trade process (Raynolds 2002b). Becchetti and Rosati (2004) found that the consumers' willingness to pay more was positively correlated with their awareness and understanding of the added social criteria. Global value chains are increasingly driven by buyer concerns, and complex information can be embedded in standards and certification procedures (Ponte and Gibbon 2005: 1). While consumption is not the focus of my research, consumption practices have a direct affect on production processes, particularly in alternative trades where consumers want to know more about how products are produced, and SFTOs, including those involved in handicraft production, have to respond to pressures from consumers. However, there has been less research on the consumption of Fair Trade handicrafts, and very little on how consumers in producing countries view Fair Trade. The views of some SFTOs and consumers in Bangladesh are discussed in Section 5.5.

The *production* of goods and commodities by Fair Trade Organizations (FTOs) is maintained through particular social relationships and cultural norms that are *not* based solely on market mechanisms. For example, Business Development Services (BDS) and capacity building with SFTOs and service providers are often paid for by the buyer, the NFTO. These practices can be understood "as both social structures and ongoing processes" (Dicken, Kelly et al 2001: 105), governed by trust and shared norms that encourage non-economic behaviour in trading relationships. Some of the mechanisms that maintain trust in business relationships are analysed by Lyon, including working relationships, customer friendships, and intermediaries (Lyon 2000), all of which serve to cement co-operative relations . Norms within Fair Trade Organizations (FTOs) are also influenced by engagement with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its concern to change business practices to include wider social issues (Fox and Prescotti 2004, Kanji 2004, Kumar 2005). Chapter 6 discusses a number of specific examples of this type of behaviour (Section 6.3).

Economic activity is always based on a system of meanings and norms (Sayer1997), and is shaped by what du Gay refers to as the discursive ordering of the work place (du Gay 2000: 113-123). Part of the model of Fair Trade is the construction of a Fair Trade identity in the workplace and in the functioning of the partnerships between SFTOs and NFTOs. Business practices are also influenced by the cultural norms of the wider society, "the opportunities thrown up by the basic institutional frameworks of customs, religious precepts, and formal rules" (North 1991: 108-109) that influence what is seen as acceptable and appropriate behaviour. While recognizing the partnerships as a site of new cultural meanings, it is also important to be aware of the limitations imposed by power relationships, and to question the "relative bargaining position of each of the partners to the agreements" (Amin and Hausner 1997: 13). Thus the ideal of partnership must be questioned, analyzing the benefits each partner is receiving (Section 6.2) as well as uncovering the costs or restrictions of the partnership arrangements.

Regulation refers to the use of power, and the influence of powerful economic, political and social structures, on the production and consumption of Fair Trade and in the construction and promotion of identities. The most obvious form of the regulation of trade is the dynamic actions of global 'free trade', where FTOs have to be competitive in order to be viable. Several powerful institutions regulate global trade, such as The World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), all of whom have significant impact on a country's economic and financial policies (Chang 2002, Stigliz 2002). FTOS are also influenced by The International Labour Organization (ILO) standards for employment practices and working conditions, and have to take account of state laws in such areas as accounting, health and safety, employment practices, and minimum wage levels. The practice of Fair Trade has also been responsive to the discourse of evaluation and monitoring (Cooke and Kothari 2002, Traidcraft 2003b), for example in the use of Social Accounts to highlight the impact of the company on a range of stakeholders. The practices of Fair Trade will also be regulated by social differentiation: by gender, age, ethnicity, caste and class. What is possible for producers to do and how they are organized will be mediated through their culture and the agency it allows them. This type of regulation is discussed in Chapter 4, and as background to the analysis of my data in chapters 7, 8, and 9.

2.4.2 Understanding Fair Trade

Thus, while the values may be consistent, what is done in the name of Fair Trade depends very much on the cultural and social context, and on a variety of institutional arrangements. Trade should be understood as more than an economic activity and more than a development initiative. Asking questions about identity, representation, production, consumption and regulation allows us to move away from understanding either trade or poverty as only economic and to highlight the complex mix of cultural and social activities that contribute to the meanings and practices of Fair Trade, to how developmental goals are defined, how actions are negotiated, and how achievements are assessed.

2.5 Conclusion

An analysis of previous research (Section 2.2) has highlighted important issues and recommendations for the future, and many of the insights, indicators, and perspectives from previous studies are drawn on in my own analysis (Littrell and Dickson 1999, Tallontire 2000, Morsello 2002, Ronchi 2002, Mayoux 2004, Murray, Raynolds et al 2006).

Themes previous research	**Improved Methodology**	**Application of Concepts**
• Meanings and practices of SFTOs in terms of what they mean by development • Relationship between SFTOs and their producers • Impact on reducing poverty • Impact in terms of social benefits: confidence, dignity, self esteem, new knowledge • More attention to gender equality and gendered economies • Limited achievements in terms of empowerment	• Use of Circuit of Culture as an organizing device to highlight range of issues within Fair Trade • Observation and interviews with staff in NFTOs and SFTOs • Large questionnaire survey with both Fair Trade producers and other similar women so a comparative study can be made • Life histories of selected producers, and other women, to explore change in their lives • Interviews with successful women in SFTO, links to empowerment • Interviews with key informants, links between Fair Trade and other institutional developments	• different understandings of poverty, with an application of various aspects of Fairtrade employment • concepts and frameworks from gender studies • analysis of power, disempowerment, and empowerment • appreciating the household as one of the sites of transformation • an awareness of other livelihood strategies, and how these relate to Fair Trade production • appreciation of the contextual factors such as social structures, cultural practices and national policies

Table 2.10 Summary of themes (Themes from previous research) in relation to the development of my research (Improved methodology) and (Application of concepts)

However, some of these studies have been limited due to their small size, inadequate access to individual producers, no mention of sampling method, little comparison to other livelihood strategies, and only a passing acknowledgement of the varying impacts on men and women (See Table 2.10). Section 2.3 introduced concepts from development practice that are applicable to addressing some of these shortcomings. Assessing impact is complex, with such complexity linked to specific context, where benefits and influences are differentiated according to product, partnership arrangements, and national context. Section 2.4 explored the meanings and institutional context of achieving development within Fair Trade networks, and discussed the rationale for the organization of subsequent chapters. A range of methodologies will be employed to deal with the challenges of assessing the multiple dimensions of poverty, the need for gender analysis, and to understand the complex routes to empowerment. It is to issues of methodology, and the process of conducting research, that I turn in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Researching Fair Trade

> The basic requirement for good research, qualitative and quantitative, is that one is friendly and engaging with people, and open to learning from what they tell you and from what you observe and experience. (Scheyvens and Storey 2003: 73)

This chapter is the link between Chapter 2, where theoretical approaches and issues learnt from previous research are discussed, and subsequent chapters where my empirical data is discussed in detail. The central question of my research is the impact of Fair Trade on developmental processes such as a reduction in poverty, achievement of empowerment, and the growth of sustainable institutions. In order to investigate these issues a range of methodologies have been used. In this chapter, I discuss how the research was organised, conducted, and analysed, examine positionality and the representation of knowledge, and highlight the many issues and events that affected the research as well as how I attempted to resolve such issues and where compromises had to be made.

The research was undertaken in two countries, at Gateshead in the UK, the location of Traidcraft plc, and in Bangladesh with four SFTOs who organise the production and export of handicrafts through Fair Trade networks. The two sites and the relationships between them locate the dynamic of Fair Trade partnerships as local, regional and global (Redfern and Snedker 2002), activities at different scales which continually influence each other. The five FTOs had a significant input into the design of the research, establishing the focus and boundaries, and providing access to the individual producers (see Figure 3.1).

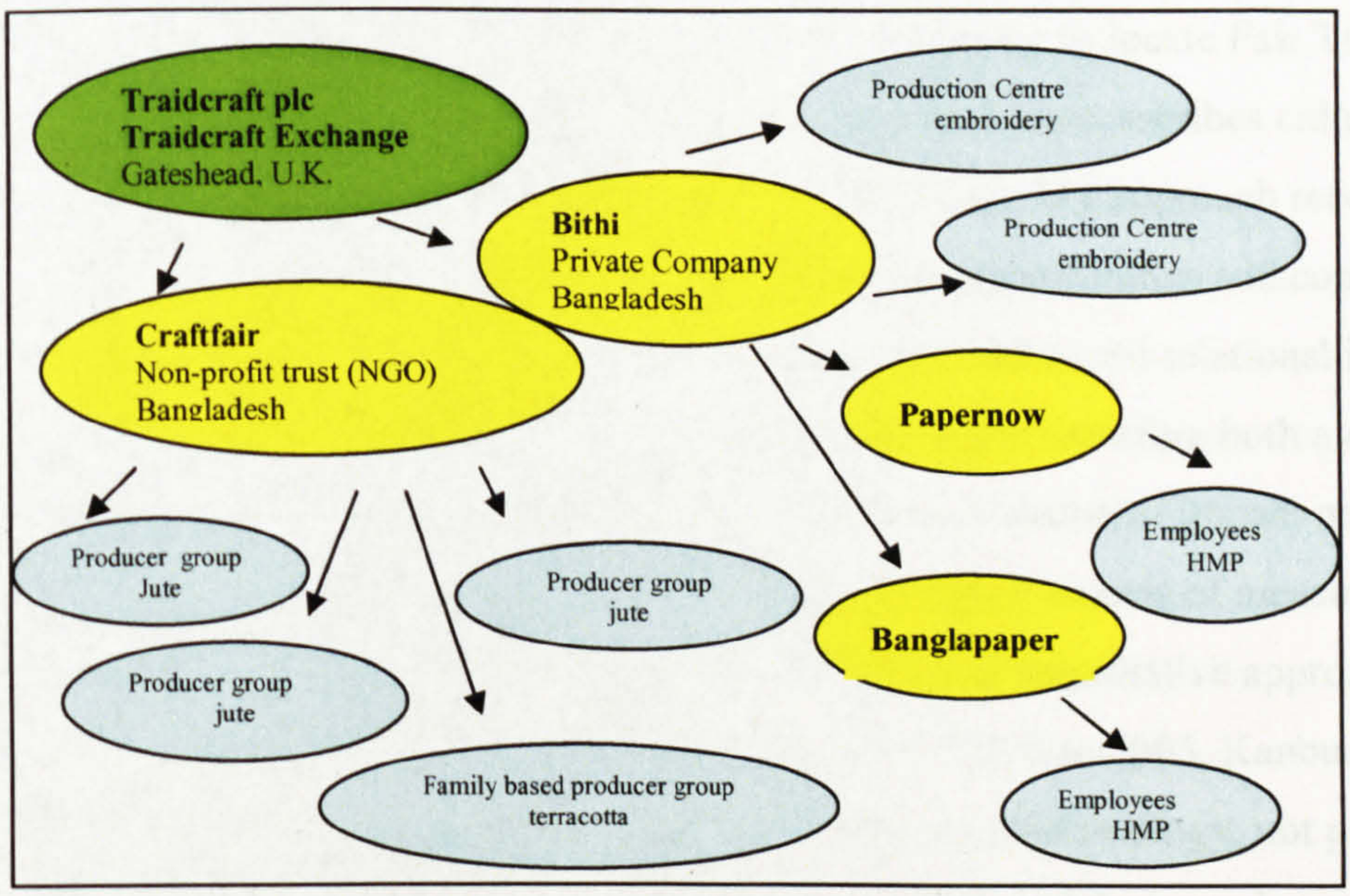

Figure 3.1 Three layers of Fair Trade Organization: NFTO in the UK (green circle), SFTOs in Bangladesh (yellow circles), and groups of producers (blue circles)

3.1 The epistemology of researching Fair Trade

Three main approaches to epistemology in the social sciences are identified by Blaikie: positivist, interpretative, and realist. He also identifies a number of critiques of these positions, such as critical and feminist theory (Blaikie 1993). Positivists apply the methods of natural science to gather empirical evidence and aim for objective, value free 'truth', an assumption of the personal neutrality of the researcher and with the objective of developing universal laws (Robson 2002: 20). Interpretative approaches argue that there is no objective world but only how we interpret our experiences in the light of our own values and experiences (Scheyvens and Storey 2003), and emphasize the particular: positionality, location, and phenomenology. Realists share with positivism a desire to explain the social world, but crucially, also see values, meanings, and the knowledge of different groups as constructing social reality. They are concerned to discover the underlying structural factors in society (Blaikie 1993) that people may be unaware of but which influence how they think and act, such as patriarchy. While we can never fully understand the world, realists believe we can work toward that goal, gaining increasing levels of understanding, for despite "the evident fallibility of our knowledge... the world exists regardless of what we happen to think of it" (Sayer, cited in Robson 2002: 29). There is a world of poverty and marginalization, regardless of how it is interpreted, that has real consequences for the people involved, and I have therefore adopted a realist approach to my research.

My focus is at the local producer level, but it has been necessary to locate Fair Trade activity within an institutional and national context since each layer ascribes cultural values and practices that are important to the enactment of Fair Trade. My approach recognises that knowledge is socially embedded and dependent on the opportunities and constraints of structural factors played out in cultural, political, economic and social relationships, "that society is both *produced* and *reproduced* by its members and is therefore both a *condition* and an *outcome* of their activity" (Blaikie 1993: 59). The evaluation of impact necessitates making judgements about interactions and attribution, bringing aspects of measurement and meaning together. Mixed methods (using both qualitative and quantitative approaches) have gained increasing recognition in research on poverty (McGee 2005, Kanbur and Shaffer 2007). I collected and analysed quantitative data, an epistemology, not positivist but realist, which accepts some correlation between variables and the complex concepts and conditions that they are intended to measure. Quantitative data were examined to establish

trends and representativeness (Byrne 2002). While data expressed as percentages or ranking and judgements about causal relationships are necessary to inform policy, this process "consists of a practical intervention in social life, and it logically entails value judgements" (Bhaskar, cited in Blaikie 1993: 62). Qualitative methods, such as focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and life histories, were used to understand the individual experiences of producers, the processes involved in Fair Trade production, and the relationship between Fair Trade production and other aspects of their lives. Ensuring rigour and evidential quality when using qualitative methods (Crang 2002) was also a continuing concern.

3.1.1 Positionality

All research is subjective since the conceptualization of the research is informed by the experiences and interpretations of the researcher (Valentine 1997). My own positionality was central to the judgements and decisions that were made at each stage of the research process. It took time and conscious effort to appreciate other people's subjectivity, as well as to find "a niche for oneself" (Shurmer-Smith 2003: 251). I was often given a privileged position when I would have preferred to be seen in a more equal, less exotic position, as an ordinary woman interested in the lives of other women. I tried to be conscious of my own values and assumptions and to make them known, rather than assumed, invisible or given (Mohammed 2001). However, my positionality was fluid and not always clear, being affected by the research process (new insights that changed my values), contested (academics in Bangladesh had a different view of my positionality), and at times misunderstood (the village woman often made wrong assumptions about me).

I was warned that my elite, outsider status (white, western, educated) would mean the village women would tell me what they thought I wanted to know (Research Diary, 12 February 2005) and thus be *very positive* about their lives and the benefits of Fair Trade. I was also told by others that my elite status would suggest to people that I had services to hand out (Research Diary, 27 March 2005) and thus they would be *pessimistic and more negative* about their situation when talking to me or when I was around. These comments were made by other outsiders – elite, well educated men – to dismiss what the women had said. As an insider (a woman with children), I felt that I had an empathy that many of the men could not understand or would not accept. While I was trying to be honest about my own positionality, many others were largely unaware of their subjectivity in interpreting

knowledge, or how their presence might be influencing the situation. Staff would see themselves as being helpful when they answered for the producers. One fieldworker told me "the women should give the correct answer" and saw her role as aiding this (Research Diary, 9 January 2005), and questioned why I wanted to understand the woman's response if it was "wrong".

Feminist geographers have argued for the researcher to be reflective to "avoid the false neutrality and universality of so much academic knowledge" (Rose 1997: 306), where "the principle of reciprocity, sharing your experiences and exchanging ideas" with research participants is now considered good practice (Valentine 1997: 121). I saw such reflectivity leading to a "more fragmented space... a fragile and fluid net of connections and gulfs" (Rose 1997: 327). While "shared meanings" (England 1997) were exchanged, they were not necessarily understood in the same ways. Once, after an interview, a woman asked how many children I had and if they were married. I said two sons and a daughter, all unmarried. She shook her head and commented that one always worried about the marriage of daughters. This is something I am not worried about, but her response reflecting her world, suggests a misunderstanding about the nature of my world and the role of women in it. A few more exchanges would not change that misunderstanding very much, because she did not have the experience to understand those differences, and exchanges will so often be unequal since I know more about her world than she knew about mine.

3.2 Researching Traidcraft

Like all organizations, Traidcraft has a set of values and ways of working that are used to achieve its goals. These norms are influenced most strongly by a practical expression of individual Christian faith or a political position concerning the need for fairer trade (Johnson and Sugden 2001). As a group of employees they are aware of their normative position. This makes their positionality transparent but it can make critique difficult, since a critique of practice can be interpreted as a criticism of a personal value position. I was asking people to reflect on their work and the practice of Fair Trade, when many thought that the benefits were obvious. A more "nuanced and critical interpretation of the self-reporting" (Hughes 1999 cited in Crang 2002: 249) was necessary. However, I needed the goodwill of the staff to smooth the practical process of doing the research, and to gain access to the partner organizations and producers in Bangladesh. Professional and personal

relationships had to be continually negotiated so that access and discussion of sensitive issues remained open throughout the period of the research. As staff at Traidcraft had a significant impact on my research both in terms of how I did the research and how I felt as I did it, considerable time and thought went into maintaining those relationships.

3.2.1 Research methods

My first research task was an institutional analysis of Traidcraft: reading grey and published documents and interviewing staff in a range of departments in the UK. Understanding institutional cultures is an important source of knowledge, where institutions are defined as both recognised organizations and as norms, rules, customs and routines (Brett 2000). Grey literature, a particular representation of the truth (O'Laughlin 1998), can be problematic with gaps such as assumed values and norms not being recorded and self-censorship where controversial topics are not written down. However, reading such documents as reports, evaluations, and reviews of visits are essential for gaining an understanding of an institution and how it operates.

I conducted open-ended interviews with a range of staff (see Appendix 3) as a means to explore topics not covered in written documentation, and to give respondents an opportunity to bring new ideas and thoughts into the analysis (Scheyvens and Storey 2003). The interviews focused on the meanings and values they brought to the construction of Fair Trade, what they did in their jobs, and how they saw the future development of the organization and of Fair Trade in Bangladesh. Methodological triangulation was used to test for consistency, group think, differences between thought and action, and to challenge any complacency in assumptions about the benefits of Fair Trade. In order to explore different methods of recording I took notes in some interviews and recorded others. Unfortunately, I found that using audio tapes changed my behaviour, I was too aware of the tape. I liked taking notes, and this method also aided memory in future discussions that reliance on taping did not. In order to capture other points not in my notes, I always wrote up a fuller report of the discussion on the day of the interview. Another source of information was my participation in 'Learning Weeks', a programme of staff development to which all staff, including those employed overseas, try to attend. I also gave several presentations during Learning Weeks in order to engage in an on-going discussion about the research.

Methodology	Date	Justification
Reading of grey and published materials	2004 - 2007	To gain an insight into the institutional perspective of the organization: to understand the values behind the work, and how they operated in different contexts
Interviews and discussions with staff (11)	July –Oct 04	To understand the different roles that are played by staff, their values and motivation, and their insights into the processes of partnerships and the impact of Fair Trade production
Participation in Learning Weeks	2004 - 2007	Learning from discussions amongst a range of Traidcraft staff, including what they saw as issues, problems, and dilemmas. Opportunity to present my findings and to engage in discussion around issues raised by the research

Table 3.1 Methods used for institutional research

3.2.2 Collaborative research

Staff at Traidcraft felt themselves to be reasonably well informed about the general nature of Fair Trade through working with a wide range of people, short life histories taken during field visits and used mainly for marketing purposes, and the many anecdotal experiences gleamed throughout their years of contact with SFTOs. Some limited studies had also been done: a good example was a detailed study conducted in 1993-1994 that contrasted two villages, one that worked with a SFTO and another village that had no contact with a Fair Trade organization (Craftfair 1993-1994), suggesting that, in general, Fair Trade was achieving its aims. What staff wanted from the current research was quantitative research, a survey of producers that would deal with representativeness, so they could make informed comment on the broader impact of Fair Trade employment. The intention was that data collected from a range of producer groups would help to establish trends, and to see if Fair Trade was contributing to achieving its goals of poverty reduction and empowerment.

Doing the survey was an issue that created some debate between the two CASE partners, Traidcraft plc and Durham University. Which is the best approach, qualitative and then quantitative, or quantitative followed by qualitative? The academic supervisors favoured the first approach. Traidcraft, however, preferred the survey done first, and did not want two years to pass before it was begun, nor did they think that it was 'too early' or 'too difficult' to do a survey. Because the overall goal of producing robust research was shared, it was possible, through discussion, to achieve both the academic and business objectives. A programme of research was agreed that followed an explicitly iterative approach: a period of qualitative research to give context and support followed by the survey, and after

initial analysis of findings, additional qualitative methodologies to explore issues raised in the survey. Completing the survey early not only satisfied Traidcraft and kept them 'on board', but during the period spent organizing and conducting the survey I was based in an office at one of the SFTOs for several months, allowing for various supportive methodologies to be completed at the same time. An advantage of the CASE partnership was that I could obtain funding to employ research assistants and to cover the significant extra expense of conducting a large survey in eight different locations.

3.3 Qualitative methodologies in Bangladesh

I used qualitative methodologies at the beginning of the first field visit to better understand the context. During the survey, focus groups with woman producers were held in several of the field areas. After completion of the survey, during the second period of field work, I conducted life histories, and interviews with successful women who worked for Fair Trade organizations in Dhaka, and in the third visit I conducted additional life histories. The interviews and meetings were conducted in English with notes written up at the end of the day. The focus group discussions were conducted in Bangla and translated into English: my notes were written up into a full account. The life histories were conducted in Bangla, recorded and transcribed by a Research Assistant. I was always present during the life histories, able to observe the women and their surroundings, and to ask additional questions when appropriate. See Appendix 3 for a summary of the various methodologies, and Appendix 4 for the questions used in the qualitative methodologies.

3.3.1 Initial period of qualitative research

During the initial weeks in the country I focused on learning about Bangladesh and how handicraft markets function in the country. I visited various NGOs and Fair Trade projects, including ECOTA Forum, a network of Fair Trade organizations which provide a range of services to Fair Trade organizations (ECOTA 2002). My focus also included getting to know the two main partner organizations, Craftfair and Bithi as their co-operation was essential to achieving the research objectives. I completed interviews with staff at the partner organizations, attended formal meetings with directors and managers, and had many discussions with field workers who regularly visited the woman producers. These were used as a means of grounding the survey (Pratt and Loizos 1992). How they understood what I was doing was important as they were part of the 'chain of meaning' that was

explaining the purposes of the research to the women producers. While all Fair Trade organizations are continually balancing the tension between social and economic goals, Craftfair takes primarily a developmental approach to Fair Trade (Buchler, Costa et al 2001), whereas Bithi has a more business-centred approach. These organizations are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 and 6. I conducted research with two hand made paper (HMP) producer organizations, but I had less contact with them as they supply to Bithi, and the research was largely conducted and negotiated through Bithi and Craftfair.

During my first meeting at Craftfair I was offered a desk in their building which I used as my base, going in most working days when in Dhaka, getting to know the people and rhythms of the organization. I was located in the Education Section, where the three staff were crucial to the fulfilment of my research aims: the endless photocopying of questionnaires, providing me with information on the producer groups, and accompanying me on many of the field visits. The Education Officer, Yasmin, became one of my key informants, aiding me with the practical problems as well as contributing to the on-going interpretation of our visits and the issues that came out of them. The normative position of employees was integral to their sense of self, and how they understood and interpreted their work. When I was discussing confusion about arrangements, Yasmin said she felt "shame" that the visit had been so disorganised (Research Diary, 18 January 2005). I took it as a problem that could be fixed with technology and/or better communication, an impersonal view of bureaucracy, but she saw it as a personal failing, making it hard to separate the personal from the institutional setting.

The relationship with Bithi was more distant. This was to some extent dictated by the physical premises of the company which were very small and crowded. The five directors had a different sense of the purpose of the research, with less interest in its evaluative and development outputs. Being committed to Fair Trade principles, "All business should be fair" (Meeting, Dhaka, December 2004), they were convinced that this was the right way to do business and that the women were better off than in other employment situations. They were not overly concerned about the research and had probably agreed to be involved because their main buyer wanted them to do it. I arranged to see them regularly, and also dropped in unannounced, often around lunchtime, and was invited to share their lunch with them. The conversations within these informal periods were an essential part of gaining an

understanding of the organization. Here too, their belief in the normative position of Fair Trade influenced their reaction, and when I reported findings that they did not like, they were "distressed" and felt it wrong for the women to tell me, "a visitor to the country, such things" (Meeting, Dhaka, March 2005).

3.3.2 Specific methodologies

I conducted three focus groups with producers, giving significance to the group experience as an important site for the creation of knowledge (Cook and Crang 1995). The focus groups were intended to complement the survey data by exploring issues in more depth (Morgan 1993); where the survey may "strengthen external validity or representativeness", the focus group can "reinforce internal validity" (Wolff, Knodel et al 1993: 134), allowing for the testing of hypotheses against new knowledge. However, I felt that the focus groups produced a public voice, the "group think and coercive persuasion" (Cooke 2002: 112-120), often a 'performance of the good producer' though this in itself can be interesting as it shows how the women see such a position. Reviewing the discussions did reveal common themes, interesting detail on their daily lives, and comments that demonstrated how important the producer groups are to them.

In order to answer additional questions of 'how' and 'why' as well as to explore the embeddedness of economic activity (Crang 2002), I conducted 21 life histories in five of the research areas. The women had been interviewed within the survey and were selected to explore important differences, for example a woman who had gained a great deal from being a Fair Trade producer, or a woman who was successfully producing handicrafts outside of Fair Trade networks. Many of these women are part of a 'hidden history', not only as poor women in villages who have little public voice, but also because they are often grouped into simplistic understandings of 'empowered producers'. I had noticed while listening to the survey interviews that the women found it difficult to answer analytical questions or questions where they had to be precise (age), and were more comfortable at describing their own lives, and that of their families based around their homes. The home is the thread that weaves and makes sense of their lives, the past, present, and hopes for the future (Blunt 2005), and I wanted to learn how work, and paid work, related to their everyday lives. Thus, I thought a life history would be a way for them to tell their story, an "interpretive biography" (Robson 2005: 195) that also provided a time frame for considering change (See Picture 3.1).

Picture 3.1 The research process – qualitative methodologies: interviews, life histories, focus groups

I had many discussions with elites, such as directors and managers of Fair Trade companies, people involved in international development projects, and Bangladeshi organizations such as ECOTA. Elites have a strong influence on communities and also on the practice of Fair Trade, so it was necessary to understand their perspective, the "frontstage... the basis and substance of their power" and the "backstage", where the power is often wielded but in more hidden and embedded practices (Hunter, cited in Hertz and Imber 1995: 158). It was essential to have a thorough knowledge of the situation before interviewing them (Richards 1996), and to have a sense of the political context, and of the organizations, systems and processes in which elites operate and exercise their power (Ward and Jones 1999). Such elites have the power to resist, deny interviews or to cut them short, and have the confidence and skills to avoid uncertainties or sensitive issues. I felt I had some advantages as an outsider; they were often more willing to be open to me than to an insider with whom they would have had an on-going relationship, confirming that outsider knowledge and status is indeed unstable (Herod 1999).

One group of elites that were especially interesting were successful women who had managerial jobs in SFTOs in Bangladesh. I conducted five interviews with these women during my second field visit. Such women, most of whom had lived in villages and had improved their circumstances within their own lives, are a link between the experiences of the village women, the realities of so many Bangladeshi women, and the more academic literature that I was reading. I was particularly interested to find out why and how they had been successful in achieving 'good change' in their own lives, and whether or not this was related to their involvement in FTOs.

Finally, I kept a detailed Research Diary that chronicled daily events with my impressions, of formal meetings and informal discussions, the experiences in the office and on the street. It was especially important to have a place to record the everyday, seeing "culture as ordinary", where "every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings" (Williams 1958: 93). The experience of working in Dhaka, living with a Bangladeshi family, negotiating public space, being part of organizations there, created multiple positions and conflicting demands (Crang 2002) that I had to negotiate on a continuous basis.

> ...how one has to manage so many different things – people, ideas, expectations, heat, the traffic – that influence both how you feel and what you can eventually achieve (Research Diary,16 February 2005).

This was the context of doing the research which also has to be remembered. I would have been lost without my Research Diary, and it continues to be an invaluable source and point of connection for me. The qualitative research methods are summarised in Table 3.2.

Methodology	Location/name	Product	Date	Justification
Observation Interviews Meetings with SFTOs	Dhaka Patuakhali Muktagacha Mymensingh	Jute Embroidery Paper	Nov 04 - Feb 07	Institutional meanings and processes Understandings of development Capacity to deliver development
Focus groups with women in producer groups	Pilot – Mirpur Kaliganj Kallakair Kallakair - new	Jute Jute Jute Jute	Jan 05 Jan 05 Jan 05 Feb 07	Topics of concern to them Issues from the survey in more depth The roles of the producer group
Life History Both producers and other women	Kaliganj (4) Madhupur (4) Kallakair (4) Badda/Tongi (5) Muktagacha (4)	Jute Jute Jute Embroidery Paper	Nov 05 Ap 05 Nov 05 Ap 05 Feb 07	Issues raised in the survey The relationship between Fair Trade production and other livelihood strategies Detail on their daily lives and how change happens
Meetings in field with managers, field workers and leaders of producer groups	Kaliganj Madhupur Kallakair Shariatpur Badda/Tongi Patuakhali Muktagacha Mymensingh	Jute Jute Jute Terracotta Embroidery Embroidery Paper Paper	Jan 05 Jan 05 Jan 05 Jan 05 Feb 05 Feb 05 Mar 05 Mar 05	Institutional responses to poverty and social goals of development Their own positions and views on Fair Trade Links to other development strategies
Interviews with successful women, SFTOs	Dhaka	Managers in SFTOs	Nov - Dec 2006	Empowerment and change in the lives of individual women
Research Diary	All areas		Nov 04 to Feb 07	Links between research process and empirical data

Table 3.2 Details of qualitative research methods

The problems associated with political violence and national strikes were particularly bad during my second period of fieldwork (November-December 2005), when people were anxious about the situation in the country and reluctant to travel or to take unnecessary risks. Key contacts recommended that I not travel far from Dhaka. Thus, I was only able to make return visits to four of the producer areas: Kaliganj, Madhupur, Kallakair, and Badda/Tongi. I was advised not to visit Shariatpur, a Hindu community, who might have felt anxious about the visit. Patuakhali and Shariatpur involved extensive travel, and three

trips to the Muktagacha were cancelled, two because of hartals (political strikes)[6], and one because of a bomb near to the town. Partly in response to being confined to Dhaka, I decided to embark on the interviews with successful women – which was possible and made a significant contribution to my research data. Due to the unsettled situation in the country it was difficult to organise a third visit. However, this was managed in February 2007, when I was able to complete life histories in a fifth area, Muktagacha, and to discuss my research with the SFTOs, though I was unable to arrange visits to the final three research areas, Shariatpur, Patuakhali, and Mymensingh.

3.4 Conducting the survey

3.4.1 Developing the questionnaire, selecting research areas and sampling methods

After extensive reading on Fair Trade, Bangladesh, poverty and impact assessment literature (Roche 1999), with useful input from critiques of micro-finance and home-based women's employment (Mahmud 2002, Kantor 2003, Izugbara 2004, Kanji 2004), a draft questionnaire was formulated paying particular attention to proposed indicators for assessing Fair Trade (Mayoux 2004). This was shown to Traidcraft personnel, resulting in some questions being moved out of the questionnaire and into checklists intended for focus groups and life histories. Once in Bangladesh the draft questionnaire was discussed with SFTOs and key informants to assess whether the questions were culturally sensitive and feasible (Scheyvens and Storey 2003). At the end of this collaborative and flexible process, I had a questionnaire that was long, unwieldy, and impossible to either deliver or analyse. I had to make judgments, bringing order to the questionnaire, and deciding which questions to cut, to shorten an over-long questionnaire. These judgements were based on my improved understanding of Fair Trade and of Bangladesh. I was hoping to have a questionnaire that was relatively open and would guide a discussion rather than act as a system of closed responses (Fink 2003b). Most of the questions had a range of choices so that the women could give one or more responses, with written records kept of 'other responses'. In order to make a comparative analysis and to consider Fair Trade production within the context of other livelihood strategies, the survey was done with two groups: Fair

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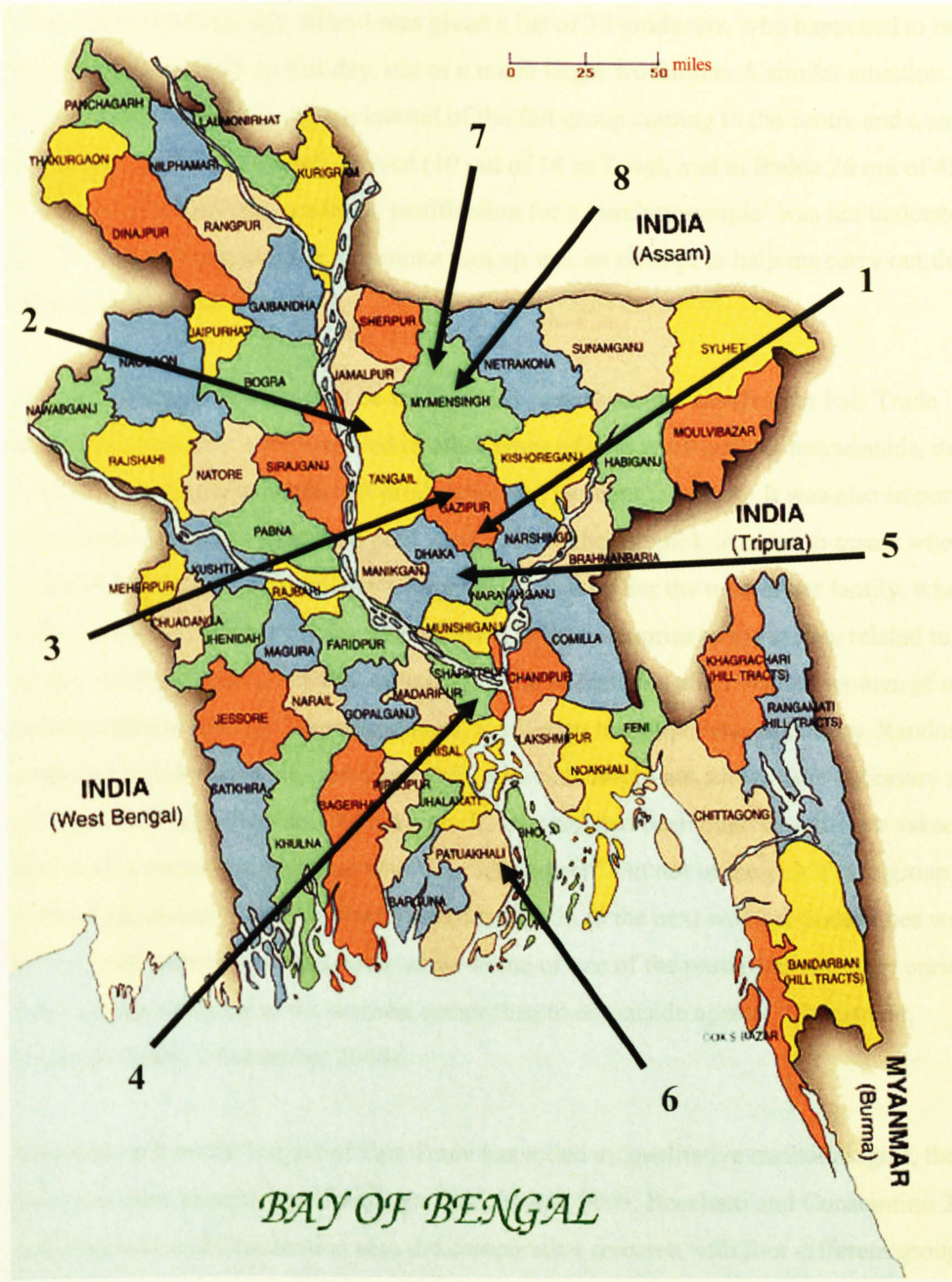
[6] Hartals are general strikes, and can be called by either the government of the opposition political parties. They usually last from one to three days. The effect is significant stoppages of transportation, educational and commercial activities. There is often violence on the streets as the strike is enforced by political supporters.

Trade producers (FTP) and an equal number of similar Other Women (OW) not involved in Fair Trade.

The focus of the survey was producers who made handicrafts that were supplied to Traidcraft through their partner SFTOs in Bangladesh. The products were made from jute, terracotta, hand made paper, and embroidered cloth, and overwhelmingly, the producers were women. Craftfair supplied the jute and terracotta products. I looked at the orders supplied to Traidcraft from Craftfair over the previous 12 months and made a list of the producer groups who had made the products, and then ranked them in terms of location (rural, urban, and remote), the type of product, and the volume of goods sold to Traidcraft. A final selection of four producer groups was made: Kaliganj, Madhupur, Kallakair, Shariatpur, where all were involved in jute products except Shariatpur which was a terracotta group. Bithi has approximately 600 women working in four production centres doing the embroidery and stitching (Meeting, Dhaka, December 2004). Two were selected, one in Dhaka, Badda/Tongi, and one in a remote area, Patuakhali, based largely on the volume of goods made for Traidcraft. Bithi had only two hand made paper (HMP) suppliers, so both were selected, located in Muktagacha and Mymensingh (See Picture 3.2).

For each producer group it was theoretically possible to obtain a complete list (a sampling frame) of the women in the Fair Trade group. I was given a list for six of the areas and was then able to attempt a random sample (Dixon and Leach 1992) of the women in the group. However, the list often had to be modified in that many women could not come or were not at home. Sometimes other women in the group, not understanding the importance of 'sampling', would arrive – paying for local transport and using their limited free time to do so. In this situation it was difficult not to interview them. The justification for random sampling had to be explained through several layers of people: the contact at Craftfair or Bithi, the field worker and/or manager at the production site, the group leaders, any or all of whom could misunderstand what was requested. Thus, the randomness of the sample was modified based on the unfolding events of each day. Many of the producer groups were not large, and in practice we tended to interview all of the active women in the group, with only a few left out due to the need to have only 36 in each area. A more serious problem



Source: adapted from www.bangladesh.gov.bd/mapofbangladesh.html

RESEARCH AREAS IN BANGLADESH

1. **Kaliganj**
2. **Madhupur**
3. **Kallakair**
4. **Shariatpur**
5. **Badda/Tongi**
6. **Patuakhali**
7. **Muktagacha**
8. **Mymensingh**

Picture 3.2 Map of Bangladesh showing the eight research areas

occurred in Mymensingh, when I was given a list of 36 producers, who happened to be those who had turned up that day, out of a much larger workforce. A similar situation occurred in Badda/Tongi where instead of the full group coming to the centre and a sample being taken, smaller numbers arrived (10 out of 18 in Tongi, and in Badda 26 out of 45). In both these situations the academic justification for a 'random sample' was not understood, and having an exact number of women turn up was an attempt to help me carry out the required number of interviews.

The second group of women to be interviewed were those not involved in Fair Trade production, but who were involved in other types of paid work such as housemaids, day labourers, commercial handicraft production and garment factories. It was also important to interview women who had no paid work (176 in the sample), in order to assess whether the ideal for women in Bangladesh, being supported by her the men in her family, was a viable option (See Table 7.1 for a breakdown of the categories in the survey related to paid work). As there was no reliable sampling frame to draw on, and I wanted women of a similar status to the Fair Trade producers, a different technique was necessary. Random sampling was not possible, and a snowball approach might not achieve the necessary spread of other work opportunities. Women producers who had been interviewed were asked to take us to a friend or neighbour who was 'like herself' but not in the Fair Trade group. This worked surprisingly well, each woman taking us on to the next woman. Sometimes we interviewed women who had come to the home of one of the producers and were curious, thus "giving authority to the women, rather than to an outside agency "(Informant, Research Diary, 2 December 2004).

Most research on the impact of Fair Trade has relied on qualitative methodologies, though there are some exceptions (Knorringa 2003, Bacon 2005, Becchetti and Constantino 2005), and Becchetti and Constantino also did comparative research with four different groups. In an article evaluating Fair Trade as a development project, Paul (2005) argues that quantitative methods, the use of control groups, and the idea of random sampling, are inappropriate, and "could not be realistically applied to the evaluation of Fair Trade", and further states that "the impact of Fair Trade is intangible rather than quantifiable" (Paul 2005: 140). She generally favours the use of a range of qualitative methodologies. However, doing this survey contributed a great deal of useful information, and the use of a

control group (the women 'like themselves') was essential for learning about other livelihood strategies, and to establish if the FTP were in a better situation than other households. Being able to select the producers I wanted to interview for the survey, as well as the women for the life histories, was both possible and essential, given that many different perspectives were covered and not just those from people who benefited from Fair Trade. The quantitative data was particularly important in contextualizing the, at times, overly positive picture emerging from qualitative sources (see Section 7.6).

3.4.2 The pilot survey

I intended to run the pilot in two areas, one rural and one urban. Two areas were selected and dates were arranged by one of the partner organizations: one to take place before the beginning of the field research period, and the other, halfway through this period. As the pilot was a chance to refine the questionnaire, testing for validity and reliability (de Vaus 1991), it was pointless to have a pilot in the middle of the main research period. This was another accepted academic practice that did not seem to be locally understood, and cancelling the second pilot was seen as me "changing my mind" (Research Diary, 5 January 2005).

The pilot was run with a producer group in Mirpur, Dhaka, interviewing both Fair Trade producers (8) and other women living in Mirpur (8). I was also able to have a focus group as many of the group members had come to the group leader's house for their regular meeting. The next day a meeting was held with the Research Assistants, as it had become clear that several parts of the questionnaire did not work well. This training session was much livelier than the one held before the pilot (Research Diary, 7 January 2005). A crucial issue to emerge from the pilot survey was the range of personal circumstances, refuting the idea that there were just two distinct groups of woman, Fair Trade Producers and 'Other Women'. Instead there were several additional categories. Some Fair Trade women had another source of earned income. In the 'Other women' category, some had an earned income, some worked in commercial handicraft production or had subcontracted work from a Fair Trade producer, while other women had no earned income. It was thus necessary to have a questionnaire that could deal with all the categories of women and allow analysis of each subgroup. This meant a fundamental review of the questionnaire, after which another meeting was held with the Research Assistants (Research Diary, 13

January 2005). After an agreement on the actual questions, one of the Research Assistants translated the questionnaire into Bangla, and a copy was given to each Research Assistant. See Appendix 5 for a copy of the questionnaire.

Research Area	SFTO	Handicraft material	Number of producers (FTP)	Number of other women (OW)
1.Kaliganj	Craftfair	Jute	36	36
2. Madhupur	Craftfair	Jute	36	36
3. Kallakair	Craftfair	Jute	32	32
4. Shariatpur	Craftfair	Terracotta	34	36
5. Badda/Tongi	Bithi	Embroidery	36	36
6. Patuakhali,	Bithi	Embroidery	36	36
7. Muktagacha,	Papernow	Paper	36	36
8. Mymensingh town	Banglapaper	Paper	36	36
Pilot - Dhaka, Mirpur	Craftfair	Jute	8	8

Note: Fair Trade Producers (FTP) = 282, Other Women (OW) = 284

Table 3.3 Details of the survey

3.4.3 Managing the research

I accompanied the four Research Assistants (RAs), being with each at least once during each field visit. This allowed me to see the reactions of the women to various questions, to check the competence of the RAs, and to observe and make notes on the household. In six areas, we collected 72 interviews based on the questionnaire, 36 involved in Fair Trade production and 36 not connected to Fair Trade, except in Kallakair where the Fair Trade group had only 32 members and thus we had 64 in total for the area, and in Shariatpur where there were only 34 producers to interview in the Fair Trade group[7] (Table 3.3).

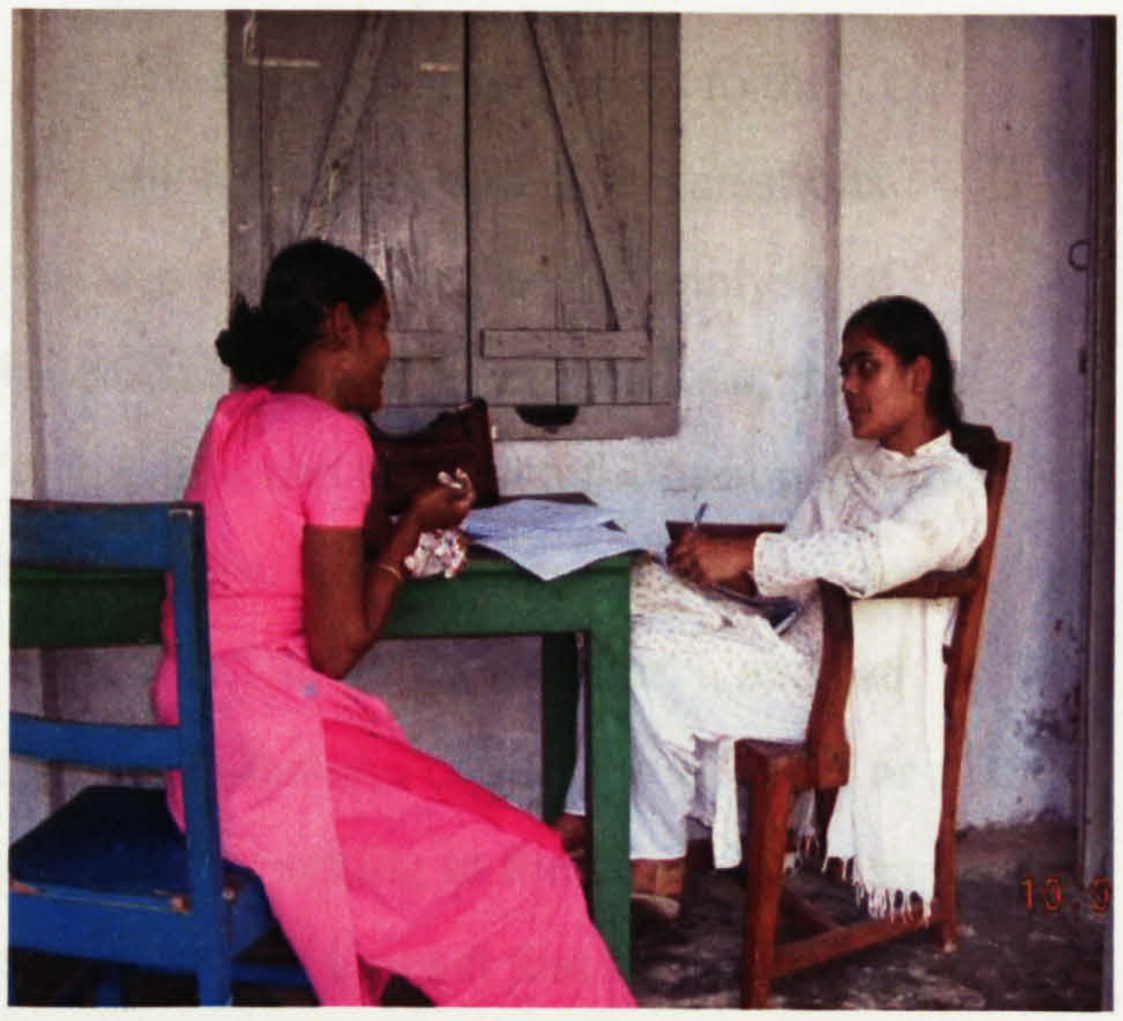
The RAs, two men and two women, had knowledge of development, experience of doing research in Bangladesh, and were fluent in Bangla and English. The interviews were conducted in Bangla based on the translated questionnaire, but the questionnaires the RAs filled in were in English. Thus consistency in questioning was maintained, and I could do the analysis in English. There can be difficulties in mapping ideas across cultures from one language to another (Smith 2003: 185), and I tried to lessen this problem by discussing the questions and responses regularly with the Research Assistants. There were some differences between the RAs. The two women researchers generally found out more information about household possessions, food intake, and the allocation of work. The two

[7] There are only four male producers in the survey: three brothers in Shariatpur and one man who works at the HMP plant in Muktagacha.

men tended to have more detail on the ownership of land and animals. One of the men wrote the fullest and most interesting answers to the last open question on change. These variations demonstrate the interpretive nature of research, where even when using a questionnaire and with common training, a team of different people will uncover a variety of information, related to the skills, aptitudes and interests of the interviewers (rather than of the interviewee), all of which adds to the story (See picture 3.3).

It was important to establish a professional relationship with the Research Assistants and to be clear about my expectations (Scheyvens and Storey 2003). Regular meetings were held so that their insights could be incorporated into the process of doing the research. I used the meetings to review the standards we had agreed, thus improving on the reliability of the survey. However, it was not easy to organise the meetings and often there was not enough time to have full discussions because people would come and go. The RAs had their own concerns and goals; a growing preoccupation was to enjoy the social setting of a mixed team of men and women, an unusual experience in traditional Bangladeshi culture. One of the assistants became ill during the fieldwork, which influenced how he did his job. The collection of the data was mediated through a range of emotions; enthusiasm and depression, irritation and sympathy, anger and calm, but care was taken to minimise the effect of such individual experiences on the collection of the data. At the end of each day I reviewed all the questionnaires, looking for mistakes, inconsistencies, missed questions, and then went over the questionnaires with each Research Assistant before the start of the next day's work. I expected to find variation in the responses given to the female and male Research Assistants. However, at the analysis stage using SPSS, I did not find significant differences in responses or issues raised between questionnaires conducted by the different research assistants, in particular there was no distinction between the two women on the one hand, and the two men on the other.

One of the standards that was difficult to implement was interviewing the women on their own, as neighbours and family wanted to listen, and indeed this appeared to be the cultural norm. The RAs said it was "rude" and "unacceptable" to ask people to leave (Meeting, Research Assistants, January 2005), but having a woman on her own seemed essential for obtaining more than the 'community norm' or those answers that were desired by important



Picture 3.3 The Research Process – the survey

gatekeepers such as field workers. We developed a range of strategies to deal with this recurrent problem. The Research Assistants would speak to the group that had formed and then move into a room or veranda that was more private. Another tactic was to speak so softly that it was difficult for others to hear, and they wandered off. In some areas all the women in a producer group came to the group leader's house. This meant that many women were sitting around waiting to be interviewed. In these situations I held a focus group discussion that gave the women something to do, was useful to my research, and stopped them from listening to each other's interviews. Other times, I kept the fieldworkers busy by asking questions or suggesting a tour of the village.

Lessons learnt from doing the interviews also influenced how the responses to the questionnaire were analysed. Some questions did not work well, and other questions worked very well and thus needed more time. Background reading on the analysis of change (Davies 1998, Mosse et al 1998), led me to include two open questions; the most significant changes in their lives over the last five years, and then, in a follow-up question, what they thought caused the changes. The first question, instead of being about change, became an assessment of their lives ("I am better off", "Our status is better"), and the second question tended to be answered in terms of cash income (income was better or worse due to unemployment, disability, or more people working in the family). It was very difficult to get people to raise issues other than income. This meant that the idea of change – and identifying why change occurs – was not very successful, and the question had to be coded differently for analysis. Another example, the question on seasonality (question 32), had to be dropped from the analysis because two of the Research Assistants never fully understood the sense of the question, though they said repeatedly that they did.

3.5 The Research Process

3.5.1 The context: doing research in Bangladesh

Research is always done within a dynamic context where other events and circumstances are influencing both what is possible to do and how people are interpreting their lives. In Bangladesh at the time of my research there was considerable political violence, including hartals, political strikes, often called at short notice. The intention of the hartals was to stop people going to work and it was thus unsafe to travel (See Picture 3.4). Several times I had

PHOTO: STAR

Pickets make a bonfire of a bus at Paltan crossroads in the capital yesterday, the second day of the 60-hour non-stop countrywide shutdown enforced by the Awami League-led opposition line-up protesting Thursday's gruesome grenade attack in Boidder Bazar, Habiganj.

Daily Star 31 January 2005

PHOTO: STAR

The Purana Paltan area in the city remained gridlocked for a long time yesterday as life returned to normal after a 36-hour hartal, called by the opposition parties, ended on Sunday.

Daily Star 8 February 2005

Picture 3.4 Newspaper pictures – hartals in Bangladesh

to rearrange field visits at short notice. The hartals also affected answers to the questionnaire: on days surrounding hartals the women were more likely to give political reasons for their lack of access to markets, while in calmer periods this option tended to be ignored.

There were other reasons why doing research in Bangladesh was difficult. Contact with agencies other than those involved in Fair Trade could be problematic due to inefficiencies and corruption, what two informants described as "Bangladeshis like to cause trouble" (Research Diary, 6 January 2005). Being an Islamic and mainly rural society, it was unusual for a woman, especially a woman on her own, to organise and manage a programme of research. Maintaining appropriate behaviour whilst conducting development fieldwork (Scheyvens and Storey 2003) became a daily concern. Interviewing male Research Assistants was a situation of considerable interest to the all-male staff at the Guest House, where I initially stayed while in Dhaka. Even the idea of doing research was often not understood, what one RA called an "anti-research attitude in Bangladesh" (Research Diary, 23 February 2005) where many felt they knew the answers or situation well enough, without needing to do research.

However, there were other problems that did not arise. I had read in academic articles before embarking on the fieldwork, that there would be many difficulties doing research in Bangladesh; it was an over-researched country and there was "no one left to talk to". I was told I would need to get permission from husbands or village leaders; the women would be busy, and unwilling to be interviewed. It was surprising then, that none of these expectations was fulfilled. When I asked who I should seek permission from, a key respondent answered "Bangladesh is a free country, anyone can talk to you. Asking 'permission' is seeking out a problem." (Research Diary, 2 December 2004). This example shows that often a researcher gets conflicting advice and judgements have to be made, leading the research along different paths. In the end, I did not request permission from anyone: perhaps there are people who felt I should have consulted them. The Fair Trade producers, who were told of our imminent arrival, appeared eager to meet with us. The 'other' women also appeared willing to tell their stories. Occasionally a husband or father was curious, but no one was obstructive. The women did not seem too busy – indeed, at times one had the feeling, particularly amongst the poorest women, that they did not have

enough to do, that we were a welcome novelty from days that "never change". In many areas more women came forward and wanted to be interviewed than could be accommodated in the survey.

Part of 'doing the research' was organising the trips to the eight research areas where the producers lived. Transportation had to be arranged for four to seven people, food for each day, and accommodation for overnight stays in a country with few services outside of Dhaka. We stayed in NGO Guest Houses in three areas, a Catholic Mission in one area, and in the home of the group leader in another. With two areas we had very long days, driving back and forth to Dhaka. The last area was located in Dhaka and we travelled by rickshaw. Such arrangements involved making contact with a variety of organizations, providing understandable explanations, both cultural and academic, about the purpose of the trip. Many arrangements had to be re-negotiated as changes occurred quite frequently. Often when we arrived at a village, people were confused about what day we were coming or when we expected to do the interviews. However, it was also the case that in spite of unreliable transport, poor directions, and hartals, we did arrive at the intended locations, the women usually prepared meals for us, and while many would not completely understand what we were doing or why, they treated us with respect and courtesy. A frequent dilemma was the two hours 'lost' each day while eating a large midday meal, limiting the amount of work we could do in the afternoons, since we had to start travelling before dusk, and the women were anxious to be with their families when children returned home from school. I suggested we have a light snack and continue working, a view not shared by either the Research Assistants or the villagers.

Westerners appeared to be very rare in the areas we visited. I was often treated as an honoured guest in the villages. A suitable chair was brought out for my use, often placed behind a table set with a cloth and flowers. My small handbag was carried for me, and people would either walk in front or behind me.

> One is constantly put on a higher level.... it gets very tiring, and also lonely, as people seldom sit next to me or just talk naturally and easily (Research Diary, 5 March 2005)

My preference was for a less formal relationship, to "obscure" my difference (Madge 1997), the privileges of my ethnicity, education and wealth, but this was not possible in the

status conscious society of Bangladesh, and I could not "escape from the power relations shaping the situations in which we research" (Smith 2003: 187). Being considered an important guest had another influence, this time on the research, where it was difficult for people to appear critical of organizations they assumed I was connected to (FTOs), as this was often viewed as being impolite to me.

3.5.2 The representation of knowledge

The representation of knowledge is always problematic, contingent and subjective, knowledge being "unavoidably the product of the spatial and temporal circumstances of its creation" (Graham 1997: 20). The people in my research, from staff to the women producers, are speaking through the lens of my interpretations and through my understandings of Bangladeshi culture. The research demonstrates the embedded nature of Fair Trade handicraft production and partnerships, responding to specific national and institutional arrangements. Such embedded knowledge may challenge dominant discourses of knowledge, for example neo-liberal representations of markets that deny a place for social goals, "the removal of certain spheres of activity from the realm of human intervention and thus from political debate" (Massey 2001: 10), whereas this research suggests such social goals are being met. In the same way, representations of development as a "totalising, homogenizing discourse" (Page 2003: 98) can smooth out diversity, resistance, and multiple forms of developmental experience. Capturing this diversity of experience necessitates moving beyond the universalization of theory to empirical research at the meso/micro levels (Crang 2002: 648, Goodman 2004) and interrogating the process of development, as in the impact of Fair Trade employment on livelihoods in particular communities at particular times. Different places tell different stories, and the variety of experience as well as shared themes between the eight producer areas are discussed in Chapter 9.

A further aspect of the politics of representation is addressing the questions of who has the power to speak, and how to include other less powerful voices. Conscious decisions had to be made so that the voices of the women producers could be heard. It was often difficult for the women to have a voice: to be confident enough to be critical, to have a sense of time that we could understand, to be consistent so that their understanding could be captured within our processes. It is often assumed that "agency is conscious" and that "power as

context is knowable" (Rose 1997: 311), but this was not the case. The women often did not understand the context of market activity, or the choices they had, and many of the constraints lay hidden to them. Nor did many have an overt political analysis of poverty, instead tending to see fate as the reason, and having little hope in the possibility of change. This was not always the case, and the Fair Trade women generally displayed both more confidence and understanding, discussed further in Chapter 8. While the women producers are living in villages where life appears to change very little, the researcher is often aware of regional, national and global ideas and events that are influencing their lives, and changing their circumstances, seeing their cultural context not as unchanging, but as hybrid, "a meeting point where different influences, traditions and forces intersect" (Hall 1995: 187). Both perspectives, that of the researched and of the researcher, need to be incorporated into the analysis of results

Another issue is that of uncertainty, recognised within development practice (Rondinelli 1993) and within research (Rose 1997). Not only do different understandings produce different representations of knowledge, but the way in which information is sought can also produce different knowledge. I found that a woman might give different responses to the same question, in an interview, in a focus group and in a life history. Is this intentional? Is she confused? Or, changing her answer based on what she perceives at the time to be in her own self-interest? I could find no pattern to these contradictory answers. The responses in the survey were sometime more positive, sometimes less positive, than responses given in focus groups. Answers on actual cash payments were often so contradictory as to be of no use, necessitating an alternative means of confirmation (the payment book of the employer, or the records of field workers responsible for paying the women, though obviously these can be false as well). Using multiple methods can "reduce inappropriate certainty" (Robson 2002: 370), and can iron out the influence of any one method's process, but it does make the analysis stage more complex since the differences have to be explained or contextualised. Rather than suggesting that there is a 'right' answer, I have instead tried to show where these differences emerged and to tailor my conclusions to the situational context.

3.5.3 Research and compromise

There were many times when the "messiness" of the research (Parr 2001) meant that compromises had to be made. This occurred in the rationale for the selection of the field

sites, where theoretical distinctions (product type, age of group, range of locations) were tempered by practical considerations (Can we get there? Will a staff member want to come with us?). Compromises had to be made over sampling methods. While I understood the necessity for random sampling (and not having particular producers selected for me), others did not, and I had to judge how far to insist, given that I also needed the cooperation of the people I was seen as criticising for not giving me an accurate sampling frame. In the end a mix of random and purposive sampling was used, which has been justified by academics as more suitable to Bangladesh.

> Sampling is a western concept. It does not fit the reality here. Lists do not exist and are not accurate if they do.... Also, you often need to go through men, which may distort who they put forward and who they leave out (Academic, University of Dhaka, Research Diary, 2 December 2004)

Another area of compromise was when I had to accept that some of the women were being interviewed in the company of neighbours and/or family members, even though I and the Research Assistants were pleasant, rude, and then cross in trying to insist on privacy. But people's natural curiosity and, perhaps, lack of a more interesting activity, meant that many continued to drift back to a place where they could, if not hear, at least observe what was going on. Significant changes had to be made when it came to analysing the questionnaire. For example, there were two complementary sections on the household and use of labour. Instead of the second section being used to confirm and add detail to the answers in the first section, I often observed the RAs copying information from the first section to the second. At the input stage, I excluded the second table from the analysis. I also had to make compromises with the qualitative methodologies: only half of the life histories were completed because of problems with hartals and renewed violence. Sometimes interviews with staff and the successful women were rushed, and, I felt, incomplete, but they were busy people and could only afford so much time.

3.5.4 Learning from the process

My learning remained active throughout the process of collecting and analysing my data, challenging the assumption that there is "one researcher with an unchanging and knowable identity" (Crang 2002: 652). Two examples serve to show how being involved in the research changed my previous understanding of an important issue. For example, as in

common with many development practitioners and academics I had an understanding of poverty as complex, diverse, and multi dimensional (Chambers 1997, Sen 1999, Power 2003, Willis 2005). I was, as are others, fairly disparaging of income measures of poverty. After having interviewed 566 poor people for the survey, I have seen how they describe their poverty in terms of income, their access to regular cash and the ability to buy and keep assets. Even when pushed they reverted to income as their main, and often, only criterion for poverty. While the lived experience and outcomes of poverty are multiple (for example, in having little power over systems of justice or inability to access education), the people I interviewed described poverty as not having enough income to meet their needs. This would be an interesting area for further research.

Another change came as a result of qualitative methods, in discussions with staff of SFTOs and in meetings with the Research Assistants, when the issue of child labour was discussed. While child labour can be abused, most of the people I interviewed during my research felt that in Bangladesh child labour was justified.

> ILO rulings on child labour are not applicable in Bangladesh… children need to work because their families can not support them…. someone has to consider the situation of the family. (Manager, Research Diary, 7 December 2004).
>
> The most difficult of the nine IFAT standards is the one on child labour. Some children need work, and they should be employed. (Meeting, Papernow, February 2007)

I thought I supported a universal standard, where international pressure drives progress towards improvements in working conditions (Nielsen 2005). Now, I am less sure. Their views raise further questions: could NFTOs 'trust' SFTOs to decide when child labour is appropriate, and would consumers understand a more complicated message?

3.6 Analysis of the research data

3.6.1 Knowledge as situated

When local knowledge is translated into academic knowledge, a process of negotiation is taking place where 'situatedness' is not given but developed (Haraway 1991). My relationships changed as what people thought of me altered and was "remade through the

research process" (Rose 1997: 318). Expectations were raised, for example in a belief that more orders would follow as a result of me being around and asking questions, expectations that I had to refute, resulting in me becoming less important to many people. There were many informants who did not share the independent perspective often claimed by academic research. Criticism of practices by Fair Trade businesses were interpreted, not as neutral, but as harming commercial viability (Meeting, Bithi, 24 March 2005), or as the academic (me) not fully appreciating a difficult and demanding environment which necessitates a less than perfect response (Meeting, Craftfair, March 2005).

There are ethical questions posed by doing research in developing countries, where, as a westerner, one is "very likely to experience and to be part of many of the inequalities that exist between the researcher and the researched" (Power 2003: 233). With this critique in mind, I made efforts to include the active involvement of people in Bangladesh in the design of the research. What is meant by ethical behaviour will be informed by the cultural, located in particular times and places. 'To do no harm' would "paralyse most researchers," since we do not know, nor can we control or measure the many, often contradictory, possible consequences of doing research. (Madge 2003: 114-115). 'Gaining informed consent', where people really understand the nature, context, and implications of the research is not straightforward. People were very willing – indeed eager to take part – in the survey, interviews and life histories, but they probably do not understand the various uses that could be made of the data, and probably also have a hope that in some way taking part will eventually lead to some improvement in their lives. The idea that research ought to lead to good, to involve empowerment or transformation, is often unrealistic unless subsequent processes are put in place, and even then the empowerment and transformation is taken out of the researchers' hands and placed in the hands of other organization. As my examples suggest, doing this research was not a one-way process, but a "living relationship" (Madge 2003) where different ethical questions were faced continually. I have tried to make it clear when such issues arose (the limited understanding of the women producers, their own interpretations of events, probing that was seen as leading to commercial harm), and the decisions that I and others made to ensure that the research and the research process were as ethical as possible

3.6.2 Analysis of data

When designing the questionnaire I thought primarily of how to record what people said. Only later did I realise that when people did not answer, or there was no answer, an interpretation to that response was also necessary. Consequently, I had to make a number of judgements at the data input stage, where SPSS was used to analyse the questionnaires. It was essential that I had been on the field visits and knew the Research Assistants well as I created new missing values, such as a question not being relevant to a particular subgroup (for example a question about working conditions to a woman who did not have paid work), a question not being asked (a methodological error), and a code for non-response that should count (a person unwilling to answer). I pushed the boundaries of what a questionnaire could be by allowing the respondent to suggest their own answers, and recording both multiple answers and responses that were not included in the options on the form. Many times the women would enlarge on their responses, and a written record was kept of their comments.

Having open questions and multiple answers, meant the input and analysis stage was more difficult than I had anticipated. The survey produced considerable data that was a challenge to analyse because of its complexity, range and depth, but the data did identify trends and correlations. In understanding causation, it is necessary to recognise that 'multiple paths can lead to the same outcomes" (Byrne 2002), and many women had similar outcomes, achieved through different circumstances. The survey also identified topics to be discussed in more depth in the qualitative methodologies (Clark 1997). Analysis of the data is covered in Chapter 7, 8 and 9 and includes the use of frequencies and correlations in order to establish trends and to link quantitative data from the qualitative sources. In order to test the significance of the association between two variables I used Chi Square, which analyses whether recorded differences are significant, or related to 'chance' (Punch 2005: 113). Chi square ($\chi 2$) refers to the degree of association between two variables, the greater the variation between the two variables, the greater is chi square (Robson 2002: 418). 'df' refers to the range of possible responses, and the 'p' value signifies the confidence value, (that the association is not a result of chance) from 0.05 (one star), 0.005 (two star), to three star confidence levels at 0.0005 (the probability of obtaining this result by chance is at least 5 out of 10,000 times).

Qualitative approaches are based on an epistemology of social reality as complex and multiple, meanings as negotiated and interpreted, and where the analysis of "subjective experience is in terms of relationships between observer and observed" (Smith 1988: 36). I developed a system of 'open coding', paying attention to their understanding of the themes, and drawing out common sub-themes, questions, and ideas (Punch 2005: 214). The focus groups discussed themes covered in the questionnaire, what it meant to them to be Fair Trade producers, and how and why change had occurred. The life histories and interviews with successful women focused on the women's personal experience of change. I employed a range of methods to do this analysis. Coloured pens were used to note particular themes, that were then linked to themes that emerged from the questionnaire. I photocopied, and cut and pasted quotations from life histories and interviews that explored and gave depth to the particular themes. I reviewed what I had not used for quotations and thought about other insights that were captured in the interview material. Finally, I selected photographs that conveyed both the process of doing research, and the context and outcomes of the research. The qualitative methodologies explored social difference and cultural diversity, which linked to the political and economic questions (Jackson 2001: 135) often asked in Fair Trade. By focusing on the everyday, they gave a more central place to "non dominant" knowledges (Kobayashi 2001). I particularly liked the way the life histories and interviews with successful women told a story – "a linking of people, places and events" (Crang 2005: 230), a narrative of meaning, that showed how they made sense of their world.

The process of policymaking (Mackintosh 1993) will privilege some knowledge(s) over others as both researchers and policy makers are involved in making value-based judgements. A CASE PhD necessarily has to engage with policy making since the partner organization has a purpose in doing the research. In this context, the purpose was to be more aware of the multiple impact of Fair Trade and to increase the potential for poverty reduction and empowerment. I used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to reflect the reality of multiple perspectives and practices of Fair Trade in a range of institutions and settings. Qualitative methods can give a better understanding of the nature of existence; quantitative methods are needed to judge extent and trend, both essential to social policy. An analysis of poverty and its links to livelihoods based on Fair Trade has to understand the experience of poverty, but it also needs to make judgements about the extent of poverty and some attempt at quantifying the resources (including

knowledge, time, finance and changes in power relationships) needed to implement policy. "How to be subjective, interpretive and scientific at the same time" (Punch 2005: 216) remained a considerable challenge, integrating a narrative and meaning approach to the life histories and interviews with a representative approach to the survey data. Through an iterative process, I linked themes with conceptual issues, and later to explanatory frameworks that emerged through the research.

3.7 Conclusions: researching Fair Trade

This chapter has discussed the research methodologies which I used to address the questions raised in Chapter 2. I have reviewed the process of doing my research by relating theoretical writing to my own experiences. The most important issues have been the need to combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and the 'messiness' of the research process which entailed many compromises, choices and judgements to be made. Some of the important points discussed in this chapter include:

- the use of a realist approach that combines a narrative and interpretive approach to qualitative methodologies with a representative approach to the data from the survey
- the justification for different methodologies and their complementary use
- the need to conduct the research at three levels: NFTOs, SFTOs, and producers
- the importance of institutional cultures and practices to the achievement of developmental goals
- an awareness of the fluid nature of my own positionality and of how it is being interpreted by others
- the process of doing research – in a particular place, at a particular time – contributes to learning, to understanding one's research, and to how one interprets the results of various research methodologies
- the many compromises and judgements that are part of doing research, and how those decisions can change the path of the research
- the complexities of representing the knowledges learnt during the research process into academic language and a PhD thesis

I have attempted to be honest about the realities of doing my research and been open about the challenges, successes and compromises that had to be made. However, I remain

confident in my research data. Much of the complexity and contradictions comes from the range of methodologies that I used and the variety of people that I spoke to. Such complexity mirrors life. I interviewed a range of producers and a large number of other women thus, increasing the likelihood of different stories emerging. I made many efforts to maintain the reliability and validity of the research methods. The impact of Fair Trade production was embedded in particular circumstances, which related to different geographical areas (8), different products (4), and different SFTOs (4). Even with so much diversity, common trends can be identified, and processes can be linked to conceptual understandings of development and to the achievement of 'good change'.

Chapter 4 Bangladesh: the context of Fair Trade production

> Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable economies in the world. It has an extremely high population density, a low resource base, a high incidence of natural disasters, and socio-political instability.... (Sen, Mujeri et al 2007: 79)

This chapter gives a brief overview of poverty and development in Bangladesh, concentrating on the position and condition of women (Young, Wolkowitz et al 1981). The handicraft producers are overwhelmingly women, and thus it is important to understand the social context of Fair Trade employment and the possibilities for 'good change'[8] to happen. The discussion focuses on village life because most Fair Trade producers live in villages, and even if they live in Dhaka or other towns, the social, cultural and economic dynamics of village life have a strong influence on them. Feminist writings and studies on empowerment, particularly those done by Asian and Bangladeshi scholars, are drawn on to further understand what changes, and continuities, are important to women in Bangladesh.

4.1 Poverty and development in Bangladesh

4.1.1 The national context

Bangladesh is 85% Muslim, 14% Hindu, with 1% made up of Christian and other religions. While the state is secular, the culture is Islamic and other religious groups usually conform to Muslim social norms, though the relationships between the groups are fluid and complex.

> In practice, the categories, of Hindu, Muslim, and Bengali are defined in relation to one another, their meanings constantly open to negotiation and appropriation. (Siddiqi 1998: 207)

The producers in my research are primarily Muslim, though there were Hindus, particularly in the terracotta industry, and also Christians, particularly in the Tribal areas. While Islamic culture has an enormous effect on life in Bangladesh, there is a great diversity of Islamic cultures (Bodman and Tohidi 1998) and Bangladeshis feel they have a distinctive national cultural identity that while internally varied, is different to other national identities. During the colonial period, Bangladesh was part of India (included in the state of Bengal), and then in 1947 became part of Pakistan (East Pakistan). Bangladesh won its war of liberation from

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[8] As discussed in the introduction, 'good change' refers to those changes which women in the survey identified as desiring, or wanting to see happen

Pakistan in 1971. Starting from an extremely low base where much of the country's infrastructure had been destroyed, it has maintained a slow but steady rate of economic growth. Economic growth, plus a fall in the population growth rate, has resulted in modest growth in average per capita income.

	Five-year average				Ten-year average		Recent years
	1981-85	1986-90	1991-95	1996-00	1981-90	1991-00	2001-03
GDP growth	3.7	3.7	4.4	5.2	3.7	4.8	5.0
Population growth	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.6	2.2	1.8	1.4
Per capita GDP growth	1.6	1.5	2.4	3.6	1.6	3.0	3.6

Source: Mujeri 2003, cited in Sen, Mujeri et al (2007), Table 4.3, p85

Table 4.1 Average economic growth in Bangladesh at constant 1995/6 prices

The World Bank has argued that Bangladesh has achieved pro-poor growth, due to a combination of macroeconomic stability, an open, export oriented economy, and maintaining economic growth (including controlling the fiscal deficit), thus allowing for expenditure on human development and rural infrastructure (Sen, Mujeri et al 2007: 88-89). However, the trend towards increasing inequality is acknowledged, as are "the gaps left by weak public institutions" (Sen, Mujeri et al 2007: 110), with striking disparities between urban and rural rates of economic growth (un Nabi, Datta et al 2002: 114). Throughout the 90s approximately 1 million jobs were created each year (World Bank 2006b), though during the same period inequality also increased at an unprecedented rate[9] (Sen and Hulme 2005: 4), where economic gains centred on the progressive spatial areas (i.e. urban areas), social groups (the educated and wealthy) and sectored sections (i.e. industry) of the country, limiting the impact of economic development on poverty across the mass of rural poor people (Sen 2001: 296).

Although progress has been made on a range of social indicators, in particular reducing child mortality by half over the past decade, achieving parity of enrolment at primary level for boys and girls, and near self-sufficiency in food production, half of the Bangladeshi population still live below the poverty line of $1.00 a day (World Bank 2006a). Girls often leave school at an early age, and illiteracy rates remain very high, particularly for women (70%), and the incidence of malnutrition and maternal mortality remain amongst the

[9] The Gini Index rose from 31.9 in 1991/2 to 36.7 in 1995/6 in urban areas, and from 25.5 in 1991/2 to 28.8 in 1995/6 in rural areas. From Sen 2001: 296, Table 10.

highest in the world (World Bank 2006b). While rural wage rates are slowly improving, growing inequality and insecure livelihoods means that the poorest face the "prospect of anti-poorest growth in the future" (Sen and Hulme 2005: 4). See Appendix 6 for additional statistical data on Bangladesh.

A study of the attitudes of elites in Bangladesh found that they viewed the poor as an "imagined, idealized social category universally deserving" (Hossain 2005: 969-970). General economic development was the preferred means of tackling poverty, with very little enthusiasm for targeted support, safety nets, redistributive policies, or policies that would deal directly with growing inequalities.

> The perception that the poor are passively virtuous means that the elite can afford to wait for poverty to be tackled through the long and uncertain processes of economic growth. (Hossain 2005: 972)

Bangladesh has two significant characteristics that affect poverty. First, the country is prone to natural disasters such as flooding and cyclones, as well as rising sea levels as a result of global warming (World Bank 2006a). This puts extreme pressure on the government to plan, finance and implement both prevention and disaster recovery policies. Because of the density of the population and high levels of poverty, many people are forced to live in fragile environments that are at risk of annual flooding and/or the effects of adverse weather. Five of the producer areas in this study were prone to regular flooding.

Secondly, governance and institutional practices in Bangladesh are corrupt, the police and the judiciary seen as particularly dishonest (Transparency International 2005). From 2000-2005 Bangladesh was judged the most corrupt country in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (Riaz 2006: 111). A World Bank study found that Bangladesh was weak on "four important measures of governance: control of corruption, political stability, regulatory quality and rule of law" (World Bank 2005b: 2). Business practices are also viewed as corrupt: Bangladesh scores particularly poorly on The National Corporate Responsibility Index (Zadek, Raynard et al 2005). Political violence is endemic, and both big parties are implicated, using local heavies as enforcers protected from the police by political influence (The Economist, 18th June 2005). This has affected not only the continued destruction of the political process, but also the tolerance and secular nature of the state in Bangladesh.

> Bangladesh stands at a crossroads. Islamist challenges, a crisis of governance and the absence of the rule of law were the defining characteristics of 2005. (Riaz 2005: 107)

Since January 2007 Bangladesh has been under emergency rule and governed by a military-backed interim government. The interim government has postponed the elections, and has pledged to carry out electoral and administrative reforms.

The greatest impact of corruption and of the frequent use of violence is on the poor who have little redress against the actions of corrupt officials and random violence. Some of the women in my research would speak of their experiences of corruption and of crime, and the lack of justice, with a weary sense of futility and fatalism. They suffer through their everyday experience of endemic corruption, but also from the impact of inefficient institutions and a slowing of economic and social development that could bring benefits to them. Respondents in The Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) in Bangladesh said that the only organizations that were important in their lives were NGOs and moneylenders (as they provided a needed service in times of crisis) (un Nabi 1999: 60). They had little trust or confidence in government institutions, the police, or commercial organizations, and felt they had little influence over their representatives or the actions of institutions. Women in particular are marginalised from effective participation in civic affairs (un Nabi et al 2002: 133).

4.1.2 Village life

The shimmering beauty of rural Bangladesh, with rain glistening on leaves and sun sparkling on the rivers and ponds, belies the persistent poverty of most of the people who live there (see Picture 4.1). Floodwaters ensure that the soil is rich and able to provide a range of agricultural products, and homes and buildings are made of local materials that blend into the landscape. Everywhere there are people working, and glimpses of women in bright saris add to the picture of rural harmony. But this picture is deceptive. Primarily a rural country, 75% of the population live in villages, and 89% of the poor and 93% of the very poor live in rural areas (DFID 2004) , where "nearly half the country's rural population is effectively landless" (DFID 2004: 4), and landlessness is increasing (Kam,

Hossain et al 2005,World Bank 2006b)[10]. While the percentage living in poverty has decreased, the absolute number living in poverty has been relatively constant (World Bank 2006b). Bangladesh is also the most densely populated country in the world.

Picture 4.1 Rural Bangladesh

Although the village is no longer self-contained, or self-sufficient, it is the basis of rural life (Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982: 16), and urban based Bangladeshis will often refer to their village as their home. Poverty is entrenched due to the 'chains' of "class and gender overlaid by the subtle processes of legitimizing ideologies… kin norms and religion have to be added as key dimensions of ideology and culture" (Kramsjo and Wood 1992: 9). Six social and economic categories were identified by the respondents in the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA): the rich (large landowners), the middle with their own land, the social poor, "characterised by food deficit", the helpless poor who are landless, and the bottom poor with no land or homestead, often with a female headed household or one without an earning member (un Nabi et al 1999).

[10] Having less than 50 decimals (0.2 hectares) is defined as functional landlessness in Bangladesh (Begum and Sen 2005: 13).

The landowning families are in a powerful position over those households with small and medium size holdings, where power and influence are exercised thorough patron-client relationships (Kramsjo and Wood 1992: 10), a system that has long characterized the Bangladesh countryside and continues to do so (Blair 2005: 923). The interaction between rich and poor is aptly described by Hartmann and Boyce.

> The merchants who deal in the cash crops of the peasants – jute, rice, tobacco, and mustard seed – are an entirely different class…. Some live in the villages as landlords, others in town and work through agents. With storage facilities and capital, the merchants hold the crops while the prices rise. The price differentials they capture are enormous… Through the exchange of the market place, part of the wealth they (the peasants) create in the fields is transferred to the layers of merchants. Receiving low prices for what they sell and often paying high prices for what they buy, the peasants tend to lose, whether they enter the market as producers or as consumers. (Hartmann and Boyce 1983: 183-185)

Neither national nor local elites favour interventions, which they see as fostering "dependence", or initiatives that "encourage assumptions about entitlements or rights" (Hossain 2005: 973). The poor have to rely on patron-client relationships[11], where "many of the relationships they use to secure their livelihoods are hierarchical, exploitative and sometimes violent" (Camfield, Choudhury et al 2006: 25). Research has shown that improved livelihoods can lead to greater dependence on patrons (Matin and Hossain 2004, Blair 2005), for example, links to the world outside the village are often through the patron. In Bangladesh, "where personal relationships of hierarchy and dependence are endemic" (Devine, Camfield et al 2006: 2), recent studies have found that people try to "negotiate and organize to achieve more autonomy in their lives" both for individual and collective goals (Devine, Camfield et al 2006: 26). Increasing their "autonomy" is central to their conceptions of well-being (Devine, Camfield et al 2006: 26). A strength of the Fair Trade partnership, which will be discussed in Chapter 7, is that it often bypasses the established patron-client relationships and gives some poor people, particularly women, the opportunity to make new relationships that provide them with services, information, and payment for their labour.

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[11] The patron refers to the landlord, rich landowner, or other powerful person, and the client refers to the peasant, poor farmer, or relatively disempowered person. The relationship encompasses mutual obligations, where the patron provides some services and possibly work opportunities, and the client is expected to demonstrate complete loyalty to the patron.

The risks faced by poor households are also significant in maintaining poverty, or pushing a family into poverty, because they do not have the assets or income to deal with crisis or uncertainty (Wood 2003). The most common risks faced by households are: a family member dying or falling ill; losing land, homes, and animals due to the effects of floods and other natural disasters; getting caught in a trap of debt due to high interest rates; and quarrelling within and between families (un Nabi et al 2002: 117). Women face the added problems of far lower pay then men, the threat of polygamy, and having to endure physical and mental abuse within families and in public spaces (un Nabi et al 2002: 138), with little assistance from public institutions.

> But neither the village institution (salish) nor legal institutions (thana, court) provided any support when women stood against [the] husband's polygamy and divorce. (un Nabi, Datta et al 1999: 63)

An important question to consider is, what is the impact of Fair Trade employment on the risks faced by poor people? This is discussed further in Chapters Section 7.4.1.

4.1.3 The position of women

Women are usually poorer and more vulnerable than men, and women-headed households are almost always poor. Gender specific causes of poverty include social, cultural and religious constraints to paid employment, lack of inheritance rights to land or ownership of assets, limited access to finance, training, and vocational services which are seen as more appropriate for men, and disadvantages to girls in terms of education and health care (Murthy and Sankaran 1999: 50-100). In addition, particularly in Bangladesh, there are limited opportunities to organise collective action and to access public institutions. There are more men than women (1067 men to 1000 women) due to neglect and deprivation, lack of food to young girls and women, and the unequal distribution of medical care to women and girls in relation to sons and men (Hashmi 2000: 6).

Women's behaviour and choices are limited by conservative patriarchal norms (Tohidi 1998, Hashmi 2000) and Islamic customs where the practice of female seclusion (purdah) "legitimizes the exclusion of women from public spaces, enhances their dependence on and subordination to men, and marginalizes their social status" (Chowdhury 1994: 94). Most rural women in Bangladesh live and work within the confines of their homes and courtyards (Chen 1983: 59), and seldom go to town or to market, a common place of work,

shopping, and social networking in many other countries for women. Purdah is meant to protect and honour women, and their obedience to male relatives is based on the ideal of men providing for the women in their family.

4.1.4 The work responsibilities of women and girls

A study by Chen considered the divisions of households from the perspective of women's labour and income:

> *Rich households*: women remain at home and hire others to do much of their household labour
> *Middle households:* can support the household through their own labour, including the unpaid labour of the women, and any small income she receives from related activities (selling eggs, milk, fruit)
> *Marginal households:* the household needs the paid labour of their women
> *Poor households*: all members of the household, including the women, need to seek paid work. (Chen 1983: 68)

Picture 4.2 Woman cooking the evening meal

The work done by women depends on the economic status of the household (see Picture 4.2). Women from the middle and marginal categories are very busy. While Muslim women are not allowed to work in the fields, and "in many cases will never have seen the family land" (Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982), they have responsibility for the home-based

processes of the harvesting of rice and other crops, and for the storage and selection of seeds.[12] In addition, women are responsible for growing vegetables, for the growing and processing of fruit, looking after cattle, poultry and goats, and in a marginal household the women are likely to also prepare goods (food or handicrafts) for sale in local markets. The many contributions that women make to the household are both significant, and skilled, but are often devalued by both men and women in their assessments of work and of contributions to the household.

> The woman's labor, judgement, and management provide for all the food, except rice, that the family eats at very little expense and without waste. (Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982: 33)

Those women who live in households with little or no land, will have less productive work to do for their own family, and need instead to find work outside the home, usually by working for other households.

The women in my survey, both Fair Trade producers and 'Other Women'[13], came primarily from the three poor categories in the PPA assessment (section 4.1.1): the social, helpless and bottom poor. There were a few women whose families owned land, and would be considered to be in the middle category. Many of the women were deserted or widowed, and thus often came from the bottom poor, and part of a new category of the "hated poor", becoming poor after "natural disaster, death of an earning member, widowhood or separation and family break-up" (un Nabi 1999: 31). Such households are isolated, with little social interaction with other groups and do not receive assistance from development agencies (un Nabi 1999). Thus, Fair Trade would appear to be reaching some of the most vulnerable and isolated of the poor. The women who are landless or in households with very little land, or without men who are planting crops, do not have enough to do and have "enforced inactivity". To them, handicraft production is very welcome, not only as a source of income, but as a source of activity, and a relief from boredom. There were many women like this in my survey. But it was also the case that some of the women also had to incorporate their handicraft production along side other household tasks; they woke at

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[12] Poor Hindu and Christian women may work in the fields. There was evidence of this in Madhupur, where Christian women were employed as agricultural day labourers.
[13] As discussed in Chapter 3, this term refers to the women in my survey who were not involved in Fair Trade production

dawn, and went to bed several hours after the other members of the household, often spending those late hours on handicrafts (Section 7.3.1).

Unfortunately, women and girls continue to be seen as a financial burden (Amin 1997, Kabeer 2000, Salway, Jesmin et al 2005), and their unpaid labour in productive and reproductive work is given little status.

> The means of production, both land and industrial facilities are owned and controlled by men. Men own capital as well as control women's labour. (Chowdhury 1994: 94)

Girls can be married young in order to transfer responsibility for them to another family, and men often take a second or third wife for the financial incentive of dowry (Kabeer 2000: 61). Widowed, divorced and abandoned women are particularly vulnerable as there is no man to protect or provide for them. This has been referred to as the 'patriarchal risk' felt by all classes of women but especially the poorest: they can no longer rely on male relatives to provide for them, but culturally they are hindered from taking independent action and the economy provides few opportunities for paid work.

4.1.5 Women, the state, and the role of civil society

A key problem for women is that many are not aware of their rights, and often such rights are ignored or not enforced. Hashmi argues that the state needs to take a lead, and that many of the laws and the legal system in Bangladesh are unsympathetic to women. It is patriarchy, rather than Islam, which is subjugating women in Bangladesh (Hashmi 2000: 3). Some of the restrictions on women, such as the custom of inheritance of land through men and the "disinheritance of women" is a Bengali system, and is not based on state laws or Islamic orthodoxy (Hashmi 2000).

Women can participate in elections, but are often excluded from informal, community and village based decisions. The PPA in Bangladesh highlighted the

> ...sharp contrast between improved socio-political mobility and the rigid *status quo* of women in rural Bangladesh. Any social gathering (for instance a feast on any occasion) is organized by men while ignoring women from the decision. (un Nabi et al 1999: 63)

Many activists and feminist see the empowerment of women as an important activity of civil society (Moghadam and Senftova 2005), where its sustainability depends on the "existence of a state that enforces universal legal norms" (Tohidi 1998: 290). Unfortunately, many Bangladeshis view their institutions as dishonest and not based on the impersonal provision of services, but on how much someone will pay for a service. Women are further disadvantaged by conservative cultural norms that limit their access to knowledge about potential services, and because women have less control over the cash necessary to pay for services. Corrupt institutions waste both the time and the limited resources of women, as well as controlling any opportunities they might have (Singerman and Hoodfar 1996). Many of the NGO activities in Bangladesh are aimed at helping women to achieve their rights as citizens, and to empowering women through group activities, collective protests, and gaining experience of working together. Slowly, women are allowed more freedom, particularly to travel, though this is restricted to activities approved by male family members, for example in order to take up paid work, NGO activities, and participation in Fair Trade groups

4.2 Contextualizing empowerment

4.2.1 Power and disempowerment

In order to consider the need for and process of empowerment, it is important to be aware of the state of 'disempowerment' and the ways in which power is constructed and maintained (Mosedale 2005). Empowerment is relational; it implies that someone is disempowered in relation to others: women to men, poor people to other classes, and marginalised cultures to dominant cultures. Fair Trade attempts to deal with all these power relations through improving access to markets and encouraging the development of employment opportunities for the poor, and for women. While Fair Trade activities can help to provide opportunities and improved chances for empowerment, they cannot make it happen: people can only empower themselves through making that choice and exercising agency (Kabeer 2005, Mayoux 2005, Mosedale 2005).

Theories of hegemonic power, as in writings by Gramsci, (Peet 1998: 129) are useful as they help to show how dominant ideas have enormous power and are thought to be fixed and natural. For example, current ideas around free markets, where social concerns are seen as outside of market transactions, reinforce the traditional attitudes of the elites, in

suggesting that 'trickle down' is enough to deal with poverty (Hossain 2005). Foucault analyses power in terms of discourse, a group of ideas that reinforce, challenge and steer a collective purpose, where individuals can be regulated or given opportunities by the way in which discourses operate. To Foucault, power circulates and is exercised, even by the less powerful (Peet 1998: 204-205) – a contrast to the idea that power is something which someone has or does not have. An example would be the practice of female seclusion, purdah, where power is unequal and exercised in different ways by women and men, and by people in different classes.

In feminist literature power is disaggregated to power over (domination), power to (capacity), power with (alliances and co-operation) and power within (inner strength) (Rowlands 1997, Townsend et al 1999, Nederveen Pieterse 2003: 113, Mosedale 2005: 250). Feminists draw attention to the idea that private spaces are also 'political' (Mosedale 2005: 251), and that power is exercised in personal relationships, within the household, and in a range of contacts and activities that were not previously seen as public, political or necessarily important. Feminist theory has much to tell us about the general workings of power, which when applied to specific cultural and historical contexts can help us to understand gender disempowerment, and thus processes which help to enable empowerment. In my own research, I have considered how women are using their new powers in different ways in response to the dominant discourses operating in their society, and used the four types of power to illustrate these processes (Section 8.5).

4.2.2 Empowerment in development theory and practice

Much of development theory and practice concentrates on the disempowerment of poor people and analyses the actions of powerful institutions that maintain inequality. Empowerment in the practice of development has been used in a number of different ways: as participation, as democratisation, as capacity building, as economic development, and as agency for the individual (Oakley, cited in Mosedale 2003: 10). The capabilities approach (Sen 1999) has formed the theoretical underpinning for the human development approach that seeks to address the "enlargement of people's choices" (Nederveen Pieterse 2003: 114). The stress on participatory planning, implementation, and evaluation of development initiatives is also seen as a means to address the disempowerment of poor people by giving them an active voice (Roche 1999). Gender analysis in development (Beneria 1982a, 2003,

Elson 1991, Haque 2002) has shown how the productive and reproductive work of women is often ignored, even when additional demands are made on them for paid and unpaid (voluntary) work, "where planners are blind to the triple role of women, and the fact that women's needs are not always the same as men's" (Moser: 1989: 1802)

The actual achievement of the empowerment of poor and marginalized groups, including women, has often been limited, though such goals remain an issue of concern within development, feminist, and Fair Trade discourses. It has received international recognition where the Beijing Platform for Action lists 12 critical areas to realise 'women's human rights', and offers a list of 44 indicators to assess women's empowerment (Moghadam and Senftova 2005: 412)[14]. In order to better understand the processes towards empowerment, Moser (1989) suggests a framework where the needs of women are distinguished between the practical and the strategic. Practical needs are those which help a woman to achieve and maintain prescribed gender roles (Kabeer 1999), while strategic needs address a woman's ability to reduce prevailing gender inequalities (Kabeer 1999). This framework is used to analyse changes associated with Fair Trade production (Section 8.5)

4.2.3 Empowerment literature on Asia

Many Asian and Bangladeshi writers call for more attention to women's rights and empowerment (Bhasin 1997, Hashmi 2000, Haque 2002, Amin 2005, Kabeer 2005). The definition of empowerment used within this thesis, is given by a Bangladeshi academic, Simeen Mahmud.

> Empowerment is the process of gaining power over one's life to increase welfare, both in an absolute and in a relative sense, and reduce subordination through the expansion of choice and by achieving the capacity to exercise agency in choosing. (Mahmud 2002: 9)

The definition highlights the distinction between absolute and relative improvements: women may make absolute gains, as in improved pay, but until their pay is equal to men,

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[14] The critical areas are: women's poverty, educational attainment, reproductive health and rights, employment and economic resources, political participation, violence against women, armed conflict, and women and the media. Indicators are grouped under the following: socio-demographic indicators, bodily integrity and health, literacy and educational attainment, economic participation and rights, political participation and rights, cultural participation and rights, and ratification of international frames for women's rights (Moghadam and Senftova 2005).

their inequality relative to men remains. Important concepts in this definition are choice and agency, common to most understandings of empowerment. Thus, in considering change, it is important to assess whether women have made an active choice, whether they have the information; confidence and ability to make a choice, and if they exercise their agency in choosing. Some change which improves their condition, such as health care, information on rights, and new skills, might be used to fulfil practical needs and may, or may not, begin to address strategic needs. With the emergence of the urban middle class woman, the idea of choice and self-assertion has "seriously altered the traditional definitions of gender roles, threatening patriarchy and male dominance" (Tohidi 1998: 283). Some women now have a more secure situation, in that they are no longer poor, have more knowledge and information, and are able to articulate their particular sets of needs, though many women may still be unable to achieve the change they want.

In a review of writings on empowerment, Mosedale (2005) adds a further point: that in addition to choice, women must be able to "redefine and extend the limits of what is possible" (Mosedale 2005: 252). In order to achieve this kind of change, one must also have an awareness of the constraints to change. In considering how to assess empowerment Kabeer suggests a framework of agency, "the ability to make choices", resources, "the medium through which choices are made", and achievements, "the extent to which this potential is realised" (Kabeer 2005: 14-15). She argues that agency and resources make up the capabilities that people possess, and give them "the potential for living the lives they want", which draws together Sen's capacity approach and feminist thinking.

Arising from this discussion, a number of points can be made in relation to assessing change and its relationship to empowerment. First, Fair Trade practitioners can learn from the current literature in development studies and feminist scholars who have theorised power and considered some of the processes that help achieve empowerment. Secondly, any discussion of empowerment and change must be situated within a particular context, aware of social norms, cultural boundaries, intra- household inequalities, and social practices in public spaces, given the need to assess "the realities of their lives rather than on a generalized assumption that they are oppressed" (Mosedale 2005: 245). Third, there are different sites of empowerment: the household, the village/community, the nation, and within markets. Fair Trade producers may experience change at all, none, or only some, of

these levels. Finally, there can be many good changes to a woman's wellbeing that are not necessarily empowerment, though such changes are important – and seen to be so by many women – and can be the first steps to claiming increased rights. Such changes are discussed further in Chapter 8.

4.3 Changing Lives in Bangladesh

4.3.1 Women and the household

Two main themes have often dominated writing about women in Bangladesh, persistent poverty, and purdah, the practice of female seclusion (Siddiqi 1998: 206). Studies show that "purdah continues to limit women's opportunities to achieve gainful employment" and that "the rules of seclusion place enormous strain on women who are faced with the challenge of basic survival", where working in public is seen as a violation of purdah leading to a lost of status (Amin 1997: 215). As Chapters 7, 8, and 9 demonstrate, women involved in Fair Trade networks are negotiating changes to the practice of purdah. Even where the roles of purdah are rigidly prescribed, as in many rural areas in Bangladesh, "women may wield a modicum of power which enables them in various overt and subtle ways" (El-Solh and Mabro 1994: 20) to introduce change into their lives. It is thus simplistic to characterise the women in Bangladesh as "victimised, powerless, and invisible", for some women "have acquired identities other than those of being a mother, wife, or daughter" and have taken on new roles (Haque 2002: 56). While too many women continue to live in persistent poverty, "because of scant development of rural areas, lifestyles have remained traditional and at the subsistence level" (Amin 1997: 218), it is also part of the story that some lives have improved and some children can look to a better future than their parents have had.

Households can cover a great diversity of living situations (Saradomani 1992). The household is the site of consumption and production, where the various livelihood strategies are selected and enacted. Fair Trade strategies, while operating and constructed at a global level, have a significant impact on the village and on households. In my research the woman defined her own 'household' by saying who lived with her, and who contributed to her or her children's wellbeing, often including a son or husband who worked in Dhaka or the Middle East. The handicrafts are usually made at home, integrated around other household duties, and where the women's paid work is often "invisible to others in the

community and to policy makers and government agencies" (Pearson 2004: 138), and "without any idea of women's already overworked life" (Saradomani 1992: 22). Their responsibilities as wives and mothers are never forgotten.

> The women make the products in their own homes. They do not go out of the house. We tell them to do the handicrafts in their leisure time, after they have finished all their other household work. They can look after their children and their husbands. 'Make your husband happy.' So, they complete their family responsibilities. (Interview 3, Director, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005)

It is in the household where the women have the most influence, and it is here that many of the changes in their lives are being negotiated (Singerman and Hoodfar 1996, Kabeer 1997, 2005), new roles being mediated through their responsibilities to others. Because of the demands of an increasingly cash-based economy, women say they want to have paid work and often the family need their income for survival. Although, I am aware of "the unevenness of people's experiences within the household" (Redclift and Whatmore 1990: 183), my data does not tell me enough about how those changes are negotiated, or how power operates within a household, as I did not interview family members other than the women. Many of the benefits (buying land, starting a business, improved nutrition) were described in the context of the whole family and not in terms of individuals. Thus, I primarily consider the household as a family unit, though I am aware of the complexities and the importance of bargaining within it.

4.3.2 Women and public spaces

The position of women in Bangladeshi society is being transformed from relatively fixed norms to contested positions particularly in relation to public spaces. These changes in the lives of women are influenced by both a "growing Islamization and the effect of transnational forces such as capital and employment" (Azim 2005: 197). Women are gradually being given more opportunity to earn an income, contributing to the prosperity of their families, and to the increasing wealth of the country. Two such possibilities are through micro-finance organizations such as the Grameen Bank, where loans to women have brought new finance and increased production for many poor families (Holcombe 1995), and through the garment industry, primarily employing women workers, which makes a significant contribution to the Bangladeshi economy (Kabeer and Mahmud 2004). Both the state, through profits from the garment industry, and NGOs, through profits made

on micro-finance loans, are dependent on women being able to work, which is, in turn, dependent on an increase in their mobility. Women are thus allowed some extensions to the norms of purdah, though this has not included a sense of their rights as citizens, or of tackling the many issues that are important to women.

> The particular conditions under which Islamization has been sponsored in Bangladesh, by an impoverished state confronted with multiple sources of foreign aid and an increasing reliance on women's labour, have ensured that the state leaves untouched issues regarding women's deportment, dress, and working conditions. (Siddiqi 1998: 213)

Azim argues that the issues facing women in Bangladesh are "violence, women's subordination, the special religious strictures on women, as well as social practices that keep women in a position of subservience" (Azim 2005: 195). Added to this are newer issues of women's paid work including having the opportunity to work if they choose, fair wages, and good working conditions (Azim, 2005, Kabeer 2000, 2004), as well as the right to be free from abuse in public spaces (Salway, Jesmin et al 2005). It is important to "highlight how women are active agents in negotiating and deploying their own identities" (Yeoh, Teo et al 2002: 7), and also to value and bring to light 'difference' among women and between the processes and goals that they adopt in achieving their goals. These issues, in relation to Fair Trade, are discussed in Sections 7.2.5 and 8.2.2

4.3.3 Transition and change

Data from my research also demonstrated the multiple issues facing women in Bangladesh. What many poor women appear to want is some change and some continuity. They would like the opportunity to have paid work, but also stress the importance of maintaining good relationships with their families (Life Histories and Interviews). The importance of family relationships is confirmed by other research in Bangladesh, where happiness was based to a large extent on "positive social relationships" (Camfield, Choudhury et al 2006: 4). Many of the women wanted some changes to those relationships, to be consulted and listened to, and to be able to more around more freely (Focus Groups, Monipur, Kaliganj, Kallakair, January 2005). They argued, as others have (Ahmed and Bould 2004), that purdah is a state of mind: they were 'pure' in their minds and doing what they had to do (take paid work) to secure their and their children's survival, so their actions, which some may see as against

societal norms, could not be against their religion. Such changes in their personal identities contribute to new forms of religious identities (Islamic, Hindu, and Christian) and to "competing forms of Bengali and Bangladeshi identities" (Maddox 2005: 128).

In order to consider further the context of Fair Trade handicraft production, I discuss two types of development having a significant impact on the lives of women in Bangladesh, one intentional development, the huge growth of microfinance projects aimed at women, and another, the growth of paid employment within garment factories, a type of immanent development as a result of the growth of global capitalism. Each has given significant new roles and responsibilities to many women in Bangladesh, leading to new choices, more work, some improvements, though also at times, the reinforcement, rather than the removable of gender inequalities. Both microfinance and work in garment industries are two common livelihood strategies adopted by handicraft producer households.

4.4 Women and development: micro-finance in Bangladesh

As in Fair Trade, it is the intention of micro-finance programmes[15] to combine economic and social benefits (Tulchin 2005), with the empowerment of women an explicit goal. The success of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, along with Banco Sol in Bolivia, and Bank Raykat Indonesia's Unit Desa in distributing and collecting loans led to the Micro-Credit Summit of 1997 and credit programmes throughout the world that had the goal of reaching 100 million households by 2005 (Holvoet 2005). The idea is that small loans to groups of women will enable those women to set up small enterprises and other income generating activities, thus leading to both improvements in the economic well being of the household, and to the empowerment of women.

Empowerment has been understood in different ways (Kabeer 2001), and measuring empowerment, which occurs at many various levels with different dimensions,[16] is highly complex, and needs to be assessed within specific context (Mahmud 2002). For example,

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[15] Micro-finance refers to the provision of financial services, including borrowing and savings schemes to poor people, often women. Micro-credit refers to the most common form of micro-finance: the provision of small loans, by a financial institution or an NGO, to a group, members of the group being responsible collectively for each individual loan.

[16] For example Chen and Mahmud (cited in Mahmud 2002) suggest the following different dimensions of empowerment: material, cognitive, perceptual and relational.

sometimes the trade-offs that women make in negotiating new roles and responsibilities mean additional insecurities or extra work for them.

> For some women in some contexts, even very poor women, micro-finance programmes can indeed contribute to empowerment. However, for many women, impact on both economic and social empowerment appears to be marginal, and some women may be disempowered... although existing data is inadequate, it does indicate the need to explicitly incorporate strategies for empowerment, rather than just increasing women's access to micro-finance. (Mayoux, cited in Hunt and Kasynathan 2001: 43)

When measuring empowerment most researchers at least agree on the categories: income and economic benefits such as access to resources, social benefits (confidence, self-esteem, mobility, and networks), decision-making, increased knowledge and awareness, and links to collective action. Mayoux has critiqued the possible outcomes of micro-finance programmes in terms of three paradigms: financial sustainability, poverty alleviation and empowerment, arguing that only the latter has the potential for not only improving women's economic and social wellbeing, but also the transformation of power relations in society (Mayoux 2005: 4)[17]. A common concern is that organizations delivering micro-finance programmes often do not have the data or the critical reflection to assess their empowering potential, and that much more focus needs to be placed "on strategies that support the transformation of gender relations" (Hunt and Kasynathan 2001: 42).

Many evaluations demonstrate the difficulty in assessing the claim that a particular programme or intervention empowers women. In a review of the literature, Kabeer suggests that "the negative evaluations focused on processes of loan use while the positive ones focused on outcomes associated with, and attributed to, access to loans" (Kabeer 2001: 66). Both Halder (2003), in relation to BRAC, and Develtere and Huybrechts (2005) in assessing BRAC and the Grameen Bank, suggest there is some impact on poverty, particularly in lessening vulnerability and improving the upward mobility of some poor families. There is, however, "no consensus on whether the two institutions reduce poverty per se", and social impacts such as "women's status, their increased involvement in family decisions, expanding knowledge, awareness, and an improved situation for children" were often the most important achievements (Develtere and Huybrechts 2005: 185).

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[17] A useful summary of the issues involved, and the different versions of empowerment within micro-finance can be found in Figure 1, Mayoux 2005.

Mayoux (2005) argues that loans on their own do not empower women; there is also a need for well designed social programmes, as well as access to market information and skills, in order to enable 'empowerment'. A similar analysis could be made of Fair Trade, that in addition to paid work, there is a need for well designed social programmes that address the specific conditions of powerlessness amongst women handicraft producers. Most of the women in my research had taken loans from micro-finance institutions (Section 7.2.5). Some of the loans were used to set up small businesses, but most were used for cash needs (to pay for medical treatment, repairs to the house, or dowry) or to fund activities of male members of the household (buying a rickshaw or supporting trading activities). If micro-finance is used for recurrent expenditure, then the impact is "short term", and to be a successful poverty alleviation strategy the effects must be longer term (Chowdhury, Ghosh et al 2005)

Thus, there are lessons to be drawn from the history of micro-finance programmes that can inform an assessment of the empowerment potential within Fair Trade.

- Empowerment, even when it is the raison d'être of a programme, is difficult to achieve and to measure
- How empowerment is understood, and the process of achieving it, must be analysed in relation to each particular context. For example, different SFTOs define empowerment in a variety of ways, as do women themselves.
- Fair Trade, then, should not give the impression that empowerment is an inevitable outcome of Fair Trade production. Different producers, in different countries and locations will have different stories.
- There is a need for more data and critical reflection on the actual benefits of Fair Trade production and how these link to processes of empowerment among producers.

4.5 Women and economic growth: the garment industry in Bangladesh

No discussion of the position of women in Bangladesh would be complete without recognition of the impact of the garment industry. In spite of being one of the poorest

countries in the world with a weak infrastructure for industry and a patriarchal society with limitations on women's mobility (Kabeer and Mahmud 2004), an export oriented garment manufacturing industry started in the early 1980s and has grown to "3,480 factories in Bangladesh, employing around 1.8 million workers, of whom around 1.5 million are women" (Kabeer 2004: 15). Extreme poverty forced many women with no other options to work in factories. This led to considerable transformation of the social, religious and cultural norms of purdah, patriarchy, and conservatism to create a first generation of female workers in full-time paid work, usually living away from their families (see Picture 4.3). It has provided the "possibility of self-reliance for the first time to women in Bangladesh… on a scale that is historically unprecedented" (Kabeer and Mahmud 2004: 108-109)

Source: http://www.maketradefair.com/en/img/labour/bangladesh_rally.jpg

Picture 4.3 A rally of garment workers, Dhaka, on International Women's Day 2005

The work is hard, the physical conditions poor, and the social circumstances unpleasant (Life Histories 2, 3 and 4, Badda, March 2005). Even so, the women often experience real benefits from their work, including opportunities for increased choice in their lives. There

were a significant number of women in my survey who had previously worked or were now working in garment factories. Some women had to leave such work on marriage, and then became involved in handicraft production. Other women got jobs in garment industries because handicraft production did not adequately support their families. In other circumstances, particularly in Patuakhali, Fair Trade handicraft production was seen as an alternative to young women having to leave the area in search of paid work in a garment factory.

In an early study, Kabeer (1994b) uses Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens 1984) to explore the economic and cultural impact of the garment industry.

> Women may not have managed to escape culture – purdah and other gender ideologies continue to impinge upon their choices and behaviour – but they are in the process of redefining it through their accounts and their practices. (Kabeer 1994b: 180)

She returns to this theme, arguing that waged work gives the opportunity for transformation at a structural and individual level.

> ... waged employment for women have transformed their lives in a number of important ways. At one level, the transformation is evident in larger structural change – in labour markets, house holding arrangements, marriage practices and migration patterns for instance – all of which have introduced a greater diversity into the social landscape. At another level, a process of transformation has also occurred at the level of individual women and is manifested in the different ways that they have responded to these new opportunities; some have used them to secure a more central place within existing domestic relationships; some to ensure a better life for their children; some to invest in their dreams; some to renegotiate the terms of unsatisfactory relationships and still others to walk out of, or not enter into, relationships which were undermining their agency in unacceptable ways. (Kabeer 1997: 300-301)

Recently Kabeer has argued that international labour standards should not be used as a way of denying paid work to women in Bangladesh and other developing countries (Kabeer 2004, Kabeer and Mahmud 2004). As bad as conditions are in factories, the alternatives for women are often worse. She suggests that improving working conditions needs the support of rich nations to build capacity, and the growth of indigenous movements to address labour conditions (Kabeer 2004). Interestingly, when working well, Fair Trade partnerships

are able to contribute to these two suggestions: the Northern buyer provides many business, financial and product development services, and the Fair Trade organization in Bangladesh offers an alternative model of business that includes good working conditions. My research data suggest that Fair Trade organizations in Bangladesh do provide better working conditions, and have also paid attention to women's need for security ((Sections 8.2.2 and 8.2.4), a further issue raised by researchers interested in women's paid work in Bangladesh.

> The two areas which emerge as priorities for action are: first,
> improvements in terms and conditions of female employment options,
> and secondly, efforts to increase women's physical security within the community.
> (Salway, Jesmin et al 2005: 346)

A number of general points can be drawn from the experience of women in the garment industry:

- Paid work in factories generally has brought benefits to women, but it has also entailed women leaving the home and mixing with men, thus losing some of the status given to women who are able to maintain purdah
- The opportunity for paid work and the growth of women-based industries is changing the nature and structures of Bangladeshi society, at the same time as it is offering the potential for more choice and freedom to many women.
- Improving working conditions and pay for women remains a serious concern and depends on the behaviour of employers, a responsive government, which enforces legislation, and assistance from rich countries.

SFTOs are operating within this dynamic situation: while the cultural context is conservative, it is changing and women are becoming active agents of change. However, this does come at a cost: women face very real challenges, including at times violence, abuse, and loss of status as a result of being paid workers. Some women and their families have the opportunity of choosing between handicraft production and full-time work in a factory. This choice often depends on the poverty of the family, the age and marital status of the woman, and where she lives.

4.6 Conclusion

Bangladesh is thus a society in transition, undergoing rapid social and economic change. Fair Trade partnerships are part of the new ideas that are influencing traditional lives. Change is occurring at a number of different levels: within the household, in the village, and beyond, forming links with cities for sources of new livelihoods, and increasing demands on government and NGO organizations for services. It is within this context that Fair Trade organizations in Bangladesh are working, providing paid work in handicrafts as a means to improve both the economic and social condition of women and their families. A variety of themes have emerged:

- Widespread and endemic poverty, characterised by patron client relationships
- Corruption and the difficulties in accessing services and enforcing legal rights
- Growth of the 'bottom poor', including many households headed by women and the social exclusion of such people
- Patriarchal risk faced by women
- The benefits, and disadvantages, of paid work for women
- Increasing work responsibilities of women
- The relationship between loans and Fair Trade employment
- Understanding and assessing achievements in empowerment

These themes will form the basis of the discussion in subsequent chapters, drawing on my research to discuss how Fair Trade employment is influenced by, and is influencing in turn these aspects of the 'position and condition' of women in Bangladesh.

Chapter 5 Meanings and representations of Fair Trade

> We tell a story, and other people join us in that story.
> (Interview, Manager, Traidcraft, July 2004)

5.1 Introduction: identity and representation

Chapter 2 highlighted the importance of understanding the meanings, practices and specific types of relationships that characterise Fair Trade institutions (Section 2.4). 'Institutions' refers not only to the organizations which support Fair Trade, but also the meanings, norms and "ways of doing things" that inform how those organizations are developed and maintained (Brett 2000). Such shared meanings act like an ideology, constructing both individual and collective identity positions: at the same time such meanings contribute to particular types of knowledges that inform the practice of Fair Trade. Combining conceptual and theoretical understandings with findings from my research, I will discuss how socialism, practical Christianity, and a critique of global trade driven by neo-liberal values, have informed the construction of Fair Trade in the North, while business ethics, religion (both Islam and Christianity) and nationalism have been major themes in how Fair Trade is viewed in Bangladesh. All the organizations share a common goal 'to make trade fair' and compassion for the poor which leads to a philosophy of social justice (Traidcraft Annual Review 2004, Craftfair Annual Report 2004, Bithi Partnership Review), though the sources for these values do vary, as does the scale of activity, from local and national to global.

Views of	Northern perspective	Bangladesh perspective
Movement	Trade justice movement Critique of neo-liberalism Global inequalities	Nationalistic Improving governance in Bangladesh Improving business practices
FTO	Trade not aid Concern about poverty Christian values Socialism/solidarity	Trade not aid Concern about poverty in Bangladesh Christian and Islamic values Asian cultural values Concern to preserve traditional way of life
Consumers	Making a difference Better return to poor producers Concern for the global environment	Supporting Bangladeshi crafts, craftsmen, and traditional culture
Producers	A fair wage Good working conditions Empowerment Understanding global trade	Having an income, supporting the family The opportunity to be part of a producer group Learning new skills, new knowledge Extending social contacts

Table 5.1 Meanings associated with Fair Trade

In both the UK and in Bangladesh religious beliefs have been instrumental in the understanding and practice of Fair Trade. Religion has an impact on society not only through the power of religious organizations but also in the ways in which spiritual ideas and beliefs influence people's everyday lives (Haynes 1999), and how collective social goals are defined and pursued. The cultural turn has helped to emphasize the links between religious beliefs and development, questioning the view that modernization is necessarily linear and secular (Raghuram 1999). Particular forms of religion, for example the Quaker philosophy of business, Liberation Theology, or social movements based on religion such as Christian Aid's campaign for Trade Justice, have given rise to alternative visions of development. Religious ideas have not only re-defined development goals, but these goals have in turn influenced changes in religious practices and beliefs (Raghuram 1999: 238). It is thus important to be aware of the role that religious belief has had on both the theoretical justification for Fair Trade and the motivation and actions of individuals involved in pursuing fairer trading relationships. Previous studies have seldom dealt with the 'meanings' behind Fair Trade in detail. Such studies tend to start with a definition or explanation of Fair Trade that emphasizes the 'unfairness' of global trade (see Box 5.1).

Fair Trade is an alternative approach to conventional international trade. It is a trading partnership which aims at sustainable development for excluded and disadvantaged producers. It seeks to do this by providing better trading conditions, by awareness raising and by campaigning. (FINE definition cited in Mayoux 2004:7)

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalised producers and workers, especially in the South. Fair Trade organizations are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade (www.ifat.org).

... to analyse fair trade and its potential as a sustainable and responsible means of production and consumption from the point of view of North-South relations, economic fairness and also as a new ethical way of consuming in the North (Poncelet 2005: 1).

Fair trade schemes aim to promote inclusion of marginalised and poor farmers in the international markets, via consumption and trade, through a package of benefits which include anti-cyclical mark-ups on prices, long-term relationships, credit facilities and business and consultancy aimed at capacity building (Becchetti and Costantino 2005: 2).

The Fair Trade movement is an effort to link socially and environmentally conscious consumers in the North with producers engaged in socially progressive and environmentally sound farming in the South.... these efforts represent a multifaceted response to globalization that seeks to re-regulate global production, trade and consumption... (Murray, Raynolds et al 2006: 180).

Box 5.1 Definitions of Fair Trade from a Northern perspective

A brief history of the growth of Fair Trade partnerships forms the backdrop for the critique. What is missing in many of these studies, and in academic articles, is an understanding of Fair Trade from the perspectives of the Southern producers and SFTOs, their particular social, economic and cultural context, and how their perspectives inform both definitions of Fair Trade and assessments of achievements.

This chapter demonstrates that the meanings of Fair Trade vary, depending on experience and locality, and that these meanings are represented in particular ways. Such meanings are often complementary; emphasizing that Fair Trade can mean different things at different times, and in different places. The meanings behind Fair Trade influence and direct the practice of Fair Trade (Chapter 6), and contribute to specific outcomes and how they are assessed (Chapters 7, 8, and 9). A problem though, is that the circulation of value positions can lead to such statements acting as claims of what Fair Trade has achieved, and that the values are self-evidently achieving their goals. This leads to two conclusions: that Fair Trade is better understood as a process, at times lost in normative statements, claims which need both more rigorous research and better systems of evaluation, monitoring and local accountability, to support or challenge them, and that more attention needs to be paid to Southern constructions of Fair Trade, incorporating Southern 'meanings' into definitions of what Fair Trade is and to assessments of progress towards social and economic goals.

5.2 Meanings in the North: Traidcraft and its identity

Fair Trade is articulated around two main messages: first, an ethical position where richer people should be concerned about poverty, and secondly a practical message, that something can be done about poverty.

> Positive benefits to producers are very important.... but the full impact of Fair Trade will come from awareness raising, and changes in the behavior of the rich. (Interview, International Director, Gateshead, August 2004)

Fair Trade is often seen by supporters as a way to live their political or religious beliefs. For Traidcraft these beliefs are based on Christian values applied to trade (Johnson and Sugden 2001, Raistrick 2001). Belshaw, writing in support of the establishment of Traidcraft, gives a critique of the failure of previous periods of development, and argues the need for an alternative Christian pro-poor strategy that would include "all aspects of unfair and even life-threatening international trade arrangements" (Belshaw 2001: 60), striking a balance

between compassionate approaches to poverty reduction and more income generating activities. One of the founders of Traidcraft, Richard Adams can be seen as a 'moral entrepreneur': he wanted to establish a trading organization where relationships between people were central (Adams, cited in Johnson and Sugden 2001: 69), a concern that was achieved through the opportune interaction between a greengrocer (Adams), an agricultural economist, a sociologist, and a Baptist missionary from Bangladesh. Now, 30 years later, on a filing cabinet crowded with papers, boxes and wooden ornaments, in the corner of a busy office in Gateshead, is a dusty plaque which reads,

> Our greatest and deepest felt appreciation
> To Traidcraft Exchange
> Especially to those OBDS field workers that
> Are WALKING THE TALK with us
> Let us keep the flame alive
> From: JX, AMKA, IRFT, PFTP

A group of Fair Trade organizations in India gave the plaque to Traidcraft Exchange. Its message of "walking the talk" shows that Fair Trade is not just a set of values but the *practice* of such values, linking Traidcraft employees to networks of like-minded people across the world. Various interviews confirm the feelings of solidarity, both within Traidcraft plc (the trading company) and Traidcraft Exchange (the training and development partner), and with others who seek justice and fairness in global markets.

The identity of Fair Trade is both individual and collective, constructing subject positions (Hall 1997) which the employees recognise and take up, while at the same time negotiating differences between themselves. Although a Christian organization, established by Christians and where managers must be practicing Christians, many employees support Fair Trade on political, socialist principles, or experience of business, arguing that a secular perspective can be just as good a basis on which to work for Fair Trade (Interviews, Traidcraft, Gateshead, July-August 2004). There are also professional values associated with particular departments that pursue the objectives of Fair Trade through different means. For example the Public Relations department may use short, catchy phrases to increase sales, which would be acknowledged as simplistic by those working in the development end of the organization (Interviews, Staff, Gateshead, November 2004). The phrase "trade not aid" reflects the organization's goal of promoting

export trade, fair prices[18] and good working conditions as a means of improving the livelihoods of some of the poorest in the world. The assurance of the rightness of their approach is nonetheless accompanied by feelings of unease as people across the organization express concern, acknowledging the complexity of what they are trying to achieve. The 'noble goals' of fair and ethical trade have a strong philosophical and value base, but the "challenges, benefits, tensions and successes" (Rice 2000) need to be better understood so that the practices of Fair Trade can be replicated and improved.

5.2.1 History of Traidcraft: the interaction between values and practice

Traidcraft plc was established in 1979, originally trading in jute products from Bangladesh. The social goals dominated. The products, mainly handicrafts and ornaments, were sold, as now, through a "network of volunteer representatives... in their church, workplace or community centre" (Barnett, Cloke et al 2005: 36) and through direct sales from their catalogue. Many people continued to buy the products because it was a good cause. Traidcraft extended its product range to include food and fashion as well as handicrafts, and was buying products from many different countries. The company continued to expand throughout the 80s and 90s, but it was becoming less and less profitable as sales were falling and much of the stock of goods could not be sold. Some SFTOs were too dependent on Traidcraft and the additional costs of supporting uneconomic producers were rising as the markets for their products were contracting. (Interviews, Traidcraft, Gateshead, July-August 2004).

> They tell me that we did them no favours... producers did not like to think that we bought their goods out of a sense of charity.... They want to be competitive and to stand on their own.... (Interview, Traidcraft Market Access Centre (MAC), Gateshead, November 2005)

The situation reflected some of the critiques that have been made about Fair Trade business (Leclair 2002, Scrase 2003, Randall 2005): that it maintains uneconomic trade, providing support to inefficient producers who make products that no one really wants. In the early 1990s, a major review led to a new emphasis on becoming both more professional and more commercial. One third of the staff at Traidcraft were made redundant, and after a

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[18] In my research, handicraft producers were either paid a 'fair price', a piece rate for the products they made, or a 'fair wage' (jute, terracotta and embroidery), based on full time employment (handmade paper and tailors). This is discussed further in Chapter 7.

review of producer groups, products were sourced from a reduced number of SFTOs, where Traidcraft's power and expertise, as a buyer, was used to share skills and knowledge with suppliers as a means to build producer capacity. Product development services were introduced to improve products so that producers would be able to compete in open markets and become increasingly independent of Traidcraft. A Partnership Review Process, with dedicated staff and a written agreement between buyers and suppliers, was introduced as a means of identifying strengths and weaknesses, recording joint decisions about how to address problems (Interview, Sourcing Manager, Gateshead, July 2004). The company now makes a profit on all its products and has increased both sales and profits over the last several years (Interview, International Director, Gateshead, August 2004, Traidcraft 2007a). Sustainable trade was not being achieved under the old structure, and so a new structure, based on partnership and long-term relationships that would include services and capacity building, was introduced as a means of achieving organizational sustainability and the social goal of fairer trade. It is important to remember that FTOs are businesses and they do have to make a profit. The distinctive feature of their type of business is how the profit is used; paying higher than necessary prices to suppliers, paying for business services to partner organizations (SFTOs), and supporting educational and advocacy work.

In 1985 Traidcraft Exchange, a charity, was established as a means of providing the business development services to partner organizations. Initially services were 'embedded', that is paid for by Traidcraft, but this proved an unsustainable model, so in the late 1980s Traidcraft Exchange moved to a local partner model where they worked through one partner organization in each country in an effort to build local capacity to provide business development services. However, this strategy was also problematic. In 2002 the capacity building and trade facilitation roles were brought together, leading to the establishment of MAC, The Market Access Centre, which is both a provider and a facilitator of business development services (Interview, MAC Officer, Gateshead, July 2004), now working with a range of commercial and development actors, concentrating on overcoming barriers to trade and establishing an enabling environment for pro-poor commercial development. MAC often provides training needs to SFTOs that have been identified in the Partnership Agreement, but also tenders for training contracts from other businesses. These changes in structure show the increasing importance that Traidcraft places on facilitating the development of commercially sustainable SFTOs as partner organizations.

These experiences of Traidcraft changed the 'meaning' of Fair Trade from just buying Southern products at a fair price, to helping to improve products and to building capacity in organizations within producer countries. The changes in the structures and practices of Traidcraft plc and Traidcraft Exchange were necessary in order to achieve sustainable commercial organizations in both the North and the South. The values on which the organization was based remained the same, but the means of achieving them were changed, largely through the application of a competitive business model, and drawing on their personal experiences in partner countries, where issues of impact and accountability remained problematic. In 2006, a strategic review confirmed six areas to concentrate their efforts, where "they could make the greatest difference to the lives of poor producers". These areas include tea, cotton, and craft producers, an emphasis on Business Development Services (BDS), promoting Fair Trade, and work on influence and advocacy (Traidcraft 2007b: 5)

5.2.2 Representation: marketing Fair Trade

Fair Trade, like many intentional developmental movements, has to "face outwards to a range of non-specialized publics", while maintaining the integrity of the "complex faces of development" (Smith and Yanacopulos 2004). There are different stories within Fair Trade and different ways of interpreting them. Staff at Traidcraft play an important role in mediating these understandings, and have significant power in the choices they make as to who and what is represented and the messages that are conveyed in these representations. Although Fair Trade has been criticized for promoting quality at the expense of the Fair Trade message (Goodman 2004), staff engaged in marketing and public relations are convinced that greater sales (and thus achieving the movement's social goals) will come because of the *quality* of the products.

> The fact that one in three customers at Safeway buys Fair Trade coffee is not because of Fair Trade but because of quality. It may be that we can convince these buyers about Fair Trade as well. (Interview, Head of Public Relations, Gateshead, October 2004).

The idea of a quality product has been added to Fair Trade values, a value that is driven by both consumers *and* producers (Section 5.2.1).

The goals of achieving fairer trade, poverty reduction and social development, are achieved through "a slow-moving process" that does not translate into a catchy news story, or if dramatic gives a "chaos narrative" that leaves people de-motivated (Poland 2004). It is difficult to identify with global unequal power structures, but *a person* changes the nature of the story and of the response. The marketing people at Traidcraft are convinced that it is necessary to use individual stories and images. While, again, Fair Trade advertisements have been criticized for being partial and simplistic, leading to the "consumption of lives and landscapes" (Wright 2004) staff at Traidcraft argue that identifying an individual producer with the benefits they gain from Fair Trade networks, gives the producers a voice they want, and contributes to achieving the goal of selling more products.

> All these criticisms are true, but you have to ask "What is the purpose?" It is to win support for Traidcraft (donations and sales) and to do this you need a human face. Abstract ideas are very difficult to get people excited about. (Interview, Head of Public Relations, Gateshead, October 2004)

As a successful Fair Trade company, Traidcraft has the power to circulate its own understandings of Fair Trade and to use these messages for its institutional purposes. Their preferred messages are usually about hope and success, with comment about the difference made by Fair Trade, through pictures and vignettes in catalogues, the beliefs of volunteers at churches and workplaces, and in study tours to producing countries. However, the "interconnections between campaigning and trading" where "organizations such as Traidcraft shape ethical conduct by consumers" (Barnett, Cloke et al 2005: 34), is problematic when promotional messages are used as sources to validate success in achieving complex social and economic goals. Promotional materials used to increase sales or as part of advocacy campaigns are necessarily selective and positive. Such positive representations are supported by the organization and by the experience of staff that hold strong beliefs about the value of Fair Trade. This can lead to claims being made about the *success* of Fair Trade that are often not substantiated by other documentation, or on the generalization of limited research in a particular place and on a particular product. Explanations of what Fair Trade 'is', may then be read as the achievement of those goals and values (see Box 5.1). There is little discussion about the difficulties and limitations of achieving these objectives, the importance of cultural context or the nature of personal relationships. Nor, is there information on how assessments are made or how quality is judged. For example, considering the information in Box 5.1, what is meant by "female

empowerment" (Nicholls and Opal 2005), or what is achieved (or not) for the community by the "social premium" (Moore 2004)?

The characteristics of Fair Trade
…. the 'deal as far as Southern producers is concerned offers:

- An emphasis on direct relationships between buyer and producer organizations
- The provision of some level of support against price fluctuations
- The payment of either a premium passed directly to the producer or a social premium to be used for the benefit of the community rather than individual producers
- The provision of pre-financing (often 50% or 60% of the final value of the order) to producers as part of a stable, long-term business relationship
- Provision of information to producers on design, demand, rules and regulations, and prices

With limited data or analysis, this 'deal' is assessed as,
In general, this more than-business relationship seems to work well …
Moore, 2004: 6

.....

In reviewing the impact of Fair Trade, and largely based on a study by Ronchi (2002) where 28 producers were interviewed in Costa Rica, the following general claims are made.

Direct impacts of Fair Trade on producer groups include:

- increase in income (Fair Trade market premium and social premium)
- improved education
- female empowerment
- preserving indigenous cultures, and
- psychological effects such as producer empowerment and its effects on civic participation

Indirect impacts of Fair Trade on producer groups include:

- positive externalities which derive from support for co-operatives and progressive plantations, and
- benefits accrued to Fair Trade groups through direct trade relationships

Impacts of Fair Trade on non-Fair Trade producers include:

- access to market and price information
- impacts on the broader communities where Fair Trade producers operate; and
- isolation of non-Fair Trade producers

Nicholls and Opal 2005: 204

Box 5.2 Explanations that can be read as claims

The multiple readings of promotional material can also be seen in the use of brief life histories (vignettes), used as a means to increase sales in catalogues, and as a way of educating the public about the lives of producers. The message, while not dishonest, is inevitably simplistic and overly positive, useful for marketing purposes but not for sophisticated understandings of the benefits and limitations of Fair Trade processes. To illustrate this dilemma Table 5.2 gives three examples of women who have appeared in promotional literature, by both SFTOs and NFTOs, giving quite truthful accounts of the benefits they have received. The women were also interviewed in my survey as a result of the random sampling of producer groups. In each interview their experience of Fair Trade production was more

	Representation in promotional material	From the survey
	[I] passed class nine and then I paid for my daughter's marriage from my earnings," she says. My only son is now studying in college and my aim is to give him a higher education. All my expenses I am managing out of my earnings." *Catalogue, Winter 2005*	Children attending college is extremely rare. It is not typical of a Fair Trade producer. Of 286 producers, only 2 had children in college or higher education. *Survey 501* *Life History 1*
	She gradually saved money…and took two savings loans… she invested money in her homestead business, selling vegetables, eggs and poultry…. *Annual Report 2000-2001* "She is a famous women – her picture is in many journals and reports" (*Field Worker, Research Diary 27 January 2005)*	Being a Fair Trade producer has helped her, from being destitute, and has increased her status, but she has had a very hard life, partly because of illness, to herself and her son, who has not made the gains she had hoped for. Her income is too low for adequate health care, or for a secure future. *Survey 329*
	"My joining at the Samity (producer group) is the turning point of my life…a transformed life with hope and happiness." *Annual Report 2003-2004*	She is an active member of the group and has been a group leader, but was critical of the way the group was run, the lack of services, and the late payments for work to the women. *Survey 220* *Life History 9*

Table 5.2 Three producers

complex than that represented in the vignette. The first woman is proud to state that her son is now going to college. However, this is a very rare occurrence and not al all typical of the experience of either Fair Trade or other handicraft producers. The second example is of a woman who has had a very hard life and while production may have helped her, her life has

been beset by problems, many of which Fair Trade employment could not solve. The third is from a woman who has used handicraft production to improve her and her family's life, but who also had many criticisms of how her producer group was organized[19]. No one is being intentionally dishonest – the voice of the woman in each representation is 'true'. But, as the short stories are the only information most people have of producers, they lead to a false picture of success, since there is little if any social, economic, or cultural context to the individual stories.

5.2.3 Certification – a Northern driven process

There are two processes for awarding the label 'fair trade' to products sold in the North: the Fairtrade logo certified by the Fair Trade Labeling Organization (FLO) to foods and commodities, and registration of organizations with The International Fair Trade Association (IFAT) for SFTOs making nonfood items such as handicrafts. Certification through FLO, has been used in order to maintain standards and accountability, and to protect the movement from those who use the term but do not apply the standards. The need to protect consumers against bogus Fair Trade is a big concern in the North. The FLO logo and the growth of Fair Trade towns in the UK have been very successful in increasing the sale of certified Fairtrade products. But, there are disadvantages in using a certification system, and the success of FLO is influencing the development of IFAT, and also encouraging its move into certification of non foods such as jute. First, FLO certification is an expensive and time consuming process for producers to go through, and while certification assists the most successful producers, it may exclude those who need more help (Taylor 2005). Secondly, such a labeling system needs effective and consistent monitoring, which again is costly and often does not include producers directly (Interview, MAC, Gateshead, August 2004). Self- assessment is a large part of both registration by (IFAT) and certification (FLO), and monitoring can be co-opted into the registration/certification process, making acknowledging problems and shortcomings difficult. Traidcraft's Partnership Review Process, including written agreements, is one initiative that goes some way to meeting these critiques. A third problem is that many products – such as handicrafts – do not have the possibility of FLO certification, so they are increasingly seen as "fairly traded" but not part of Fair Trade (Discussion, Fair Trade

[19] Many of these problems were subsequently addressed as a result of confidential reports and discussions with the SFTOs.

Activist, Keswick, March 2006). Handicraft organizations can be registered with IFAT, but such registration of Fair Trade production is less well known. See Appendix 7 for a summary of the certification (FLO) and registration (IFAT) processes.

Certification through FLO contributes to reducing the understanding of Fair Trade to the consumer and general public to *successful products* and not to the *processes* that are necessary to making poor producers competitive. Whereas in the past, the interpretation of Fair Trade norms could be part of a process that included applying such norms to a particular cultural context (Scherer-Haynes 2007), now official standards from the North are imposed on SFTOs. Many staff at Traidcraft argued that such a rule based approach to compliance is too narrow, and that there is great value in locally developed, managed and monitored Fair Trade criteria, where the focus for the NFTO should be on being as propoor as possible (Interviews, Traidcraft, August – September 2004) Adapting to such locally derived norms remains an important part of Fair Trade partnership, a process that should increasingly include Southern understanding of Fair Trade.

5.2.4 Conclusion

The meanings and values that inform Traidcraft practices are incorporated into specific types of social relationships and maintained through shared values. The values have driven changes to the organization, the need to become commercially viable, to manage the delivery of business development skills and capacity building of SFTOs, and to improve the quality of products. The central shared value is a belief in the possibility of reducing poverty by increasing export opportunities for poor producers, supported by sustainable SFTOs (Section 5.2.1) "through a trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect" (Smith and Barrientos 2005). These meanings are circulated through advertising and promotional materials. However, the sincerely held values which drive practice, can lead to the making of claims about the impact of Fair Trade, where promotional and campaigning materials are also, at times, read uncritically to suggest the achievement of those values. It is thus increasingly necessary to make a distinction between marketing and promotional messages and more complex understandings about achievements, and to support the process of certification and registration with robust independent research, as well as evaluation and monitoring processes, that are linked to learning, rather than to selling.

5.3 Bangladesh: a developmental model of Fair Trade

SFTOs, such as Craftfair and Bithi, are the link between northern buyers and consumers, and the producers. One of the limitations of focusing so much attention on individual producers is that it largely ignores the important and central contribution of the SFTOs, not only in achieving commercial sustainability for artisans, but for giving attention to the social goals of the movement. Such goals are helped by the actions of buyers and consumers, but are largely defined, delivered, and maintained by the SFTOs who work directly with the producers. A key question is whether "the FTOs foster empowerment and improve the quality of life for artisans" (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 24). Section 5.3 and 5.4 will consider the meanings that contribute to what Fair Trade is to two such SFTOs, Craftfair and Bithi, how such meanings are represented, and a sense of their impact on wider developmental goals, which are defined differently by each organization.

5.3.1 Meanings that Craftfair gives to Fair Trade

Craftfair was founded in 1973 as a project of a large international Catholic development NGO, to provide income and rehabilitation work to war-affected women in Bangladesh. Two suitcases of sikas, hanging baskets made of jute, were taken to the USA to start the export trade (Craftfair Annual Report 2004: 21). The organization began with a developmental focus using a common NGO strategy, craft production for income generation, with a paternalistic role, based on "its vision of the role of the Catholic Church towards the poor" (Buchler 2001: 21). The approach grew to "seeking the liberation and empowerment of women through organizing them together in groups for their self-reliant development" (Craftfair Annual Report 2004: 3). Their mission statement makes clear that Craftfair is, at heart, a development organization.

> Organizing the poor, neglected rural women and the indigenous people of our society, by providing them proper training and creating awareness, and to help them increase their economic development, working skills, leaderships and to become self-reliant. (Annual Report 2005-2006: 6)

The organization has grown out of an application of religious beliefs to economic practices similar to that which influenced the establishment of Traidcraft, " the needs of the world economy must be tested against the moral demands of the gospel" (Raistrick, in Johnson and Sugden 2001: 119). Religion and development are viewed here as "a set of interlinking processes which engage with each other to produce changes" (Raghuram 1999: 239). As

part of their mission to help disadvantaged peoples, Craftfair has set up producer groups in the poorest areas of the country, including with Tribal peoples who are often among the most marginalized groups in Bangladesh. For instance, a producer group has been established in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where indigenous peoples "were victimized by the insurgency of some militant groups from 1972-1997" (Craftfair Annual Report 1999: 11). This is an area where the government continues to maintain a military presence and where there are restrictions on travel.

In 1981 Craftfair became independent and changed its status to a non-profit handicraft marketing trust. It continued to expand both its product ranges and its producer groups, until it was working in 17 different areas of Bangladesh with over 8,000 producers. Competition, varying quality, and changing market conditions led to a major review in the early 90s, helped by an evaluation conducted by Traidcraft which identified "product diversification, seeking mainstream markets, and strengthening the social development activities" as its main recommendations (Traidcraft Evaluation 1992). Social justice and concern for artisans remained central to Craftfair (Annual Report 2004: 22), but in order to achieve these goals it was necessary for the organization to become more commercial and less like an NGO. The evaluation, part of Traidcraft's own moves to commercial viability, is an example of the kind of assistance which is given by NFTOs to SFTOs. Traidcraft could have ceased to order from Craftfair but instead invested in Craftfair so that the two organizations could achieve their commercial objectives together.

As it became more economically sustainable, Craftfair also changed internal structures and expanded its programme of social development. A more central role was given to producers, whose representatives are now members on the Board of Trustees (Meeting, Information Officer, Dhaka, March 2005)[20]. Producers are directly represented in institutional decision-making and are able to raise producer concerns, thus gaining experience at the same time as the management of the organization is improved, although their ability to discuss issues on an equal basis is still likely to be constrained. In 2003 byelaws were brought in to manage the introduction of new members to producer groups,

[20] The Board of Trustees is made up of ten members, two life members (the founders of the organization), the Director of Craftfair, a representative from Caritas, a nominated Chairman, and five representatives from producer groups.

and to formalise democratic processes of group management such as the election of officers to specific terms (Meeting, Education Officer, Dhaka, January 2005). Who should leave or retire from a producer group, and who should join a new group are difficult processes to manage, given that membership in a producer group is valued so highly[21]. The introduction of democratic processes and officer roles has increased the opportunities for women producers to acquire new knowledge (for example bookkeeping) and to develop social skills.

Craftfair now sees itself as a secular organization, one that respects all religions, where their guiding belief is in "the power of the people" (Meeting, Director, Dhaka, March 2005). The value they place on being secular reflects the widely held desire in Bangladesh to maintain a particular, secular Bangladeshi identity. Craftfair was a development organization selling crafts before it became involved in Fair Trade networks: its identity and 'ways of doing things' have evolved in response to its social activities and Bangla culture. Craftfair is primarily concerned with the contribution Fair Trade could make to their ideal of equitable development in Bangladesh. Their concern is more with national development than global trade, though of course the latter influences the potential for national development. Their motivation for being involved in Fair Trade partnerships is that they see such partnerships as bringing benefits to their artisans; in particular, Fair Trade buyers accept Craftfair's pricing policy. This distinctive identity incorporating religious, national, commercial and social goals, is captured in their statement of objectives (see Appendix 8). Neither their objectives nor their mission statement emphasize trade, or Fair Trade, but rather the promotion of developmental objectives. Trade, however, is the foundation stone of their success; a sign of this success is the award of the National Export Trophy 10 times, and they now export to 48 countries (Craftfair Annual Report 2004: 23).

5.3.2 The representation of Fair Trade by Craftfair

One of the values which is particularly important to Craftfair is *transparency:* this is seen as essential in its relationships not only with producers and buyers, but also with other organizations in Bangladesh (Meeting, Director, Dhaka, March 2005). Through a range of written documents, a website, and self-assessments, Craftfair states its objectives, how a

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[21] Two-thirds of women who were not involved in Fair Trade production, when asked if they would like to join a producer group, replied yes (Section 8.2.1).

fair price is calculated for its products, as well as an evaluation of their programmes, and how they might improve (Craftfair Annual Reports 1999, 2000, 2003-2004). What other businesses might consider commercially sensitive is open to public scrutiny. An example of this is the illustration of pricing policy (Box 5.2).

PRICING POLICY
45-50% artisan wages
10% raw materials
8% finishing work
8-10% transportation of the products to Dhaka
15% overheads, administration and marketing
10% group support and development activities

(Annual Report 2003-2004: 25, Interview, Information Officer, Dhaka, March 2005).

Box 5.3 The pricing policy of Craftfair

The transparent pricing policy makes a number of priorities clear: the wage to the producer is the largest part of the price, the producers get additional services through the 10% support category, and the company adds only 15% to the price of the product for overheads from which it has to pay staff and make some profit. I was able to obtain this information for each of the products. Some of the women in my survey were aware of how the prices were set, and while they sometimes felt they should be paid more, they also understood there were other costs to the organization.

The written documents also highlight the range of stakeholders that are seen as important to Craftfair, as well as a sense of how it involves staff and producers. The Annual Report of 2000-2001 gives three SWOT analyses: from marketing, organizational, and employee perspectives. Annual Reports also include information about the producers through group reports and individual stories. Buyers are identified who have provided business services and product development. The organization is involved not only in trading relationships, but also in processes that contribute to wider social goals. Environmental pollution connected with plastic bags, the problems of hazardous chemicals in their production and blocked drains and waterways due to their disposal (Craftfair Annual Report 1999: 27-29) are discussed in an Annual Report. Seeing 'the environment' as a stakeholder not only contributed to the growing environmental awareness of the public but also furthered

Craftfair's marketing strategy for an alternative, reusable jute bags. Plastic bags were banned in Bangladesh in 2003, providing an expanding local market for jute and cotton bags.

5.3.3 Conclusion

The meanings and experiences that influence Craftfair are different, though complementary, to Northern constructions of Fair Trade:

- an interest in export handicraft production that pre-dates their involvement in Fair Trade networks
- a concern to bring equitable development to Bangladesh
- an application of individual Christian values to developmental goals and trading relationships
- a secular organization, working with all religions in a society where the place of religion is contested

Craftfair is involved in Fair Trade because such trade brings benefits to disadvantaged and poor people in Bangladesh, and thus helps to achieve their institutional goals. These meanings have led to specific practices: for example, including producer representatives on the Board of Trustees, being part of campaigns leading to improvements in the physical environment in Bangladesh, and contributing to the development of Fair Trade networks and organizations within Asia as a means to pursue a particular Asian identity for Fair Trade. While the idea of a 'particular Asian identity' (Meeting, Director, Dhaka, March 2005, February 2007) is inadequately specified, it seems to be an attempt to construct an alternative vision of Fair Trade that is not based solely on a Northern model.

5.4 Bangladesh: a business model of Fair Trade

5.4.1 The meanings and practices that make Bithi a Fair Trade Company

Bithi is a private sector business that voluntarily abides by Fair Trade principles. It pays its staff above the market rate and provides good working conditions for its women producers (Research Diary, March 2005). Bithi was set up in 1999, following on from the ethos of IDEAS International (1989-1998), a previous handicraft company. The identity of the company is based on ideals of good business practice and a concern that their business should play a part in the social and economic development of Bangladesh. Their meaning

of Fair Trade is informed by their concern for honest, transparent business practices, a view that "all business should be fair" (Meetings, Directors, Dhaka, December 2004). A major worry to them is how to make the government apply the rules so that all trade is fair, specifically that the minimum wage is enforced, that working conditions are monitored, and that corruption and the use of bribes are ended. Corrupt business practices add costs to companies, reduce efficiency, and make achieving competitiveness more difficult, particularly in firms like Bithi who want to have good wages and conditions for their workers. The view of the directors is perhaps closest to ideas of corporate social responsibility, where the intention is for businesses to improve their social and economic practices.

Such ideas about fair business practices are not based on a western notion of business or a Christian ethic, but can be seen as intrinsic to Asian[22] and Islamic values, where, they say, the goal of each side winning in a business deal and the importance placed on maintaining constructive relationships can be seen as complementary to northern constructions of Fair Trade. Understandings of Fair Trade were often linked to a sense of national pride, of wanting Bangladesh to grow and prosper, using good business practice as one way of doing this. Such concerns are rooted in their own experience and cultural values, where telling the truth, giving correct costs and prices, and preserving good will in transactions can be supported by Quranic verse (Stoller 2002). A critique of neo-liberal policies can also be based on Islamic morality. Rational choice defined by neo-liberals to "exclude the effect of ethical factors on the decision-making process" would be redefined by Islamic economics to "take into consideration moral obligations as well" (Naqvi 1994: 67).

> [The] over-emphasis of capitalism on material values upsets the delicate balance between ethical and economic behaviours.... in principle Islam would seek to minimise the exploitation of labour by seeking a fair, functional distribution of income. (Naqvi 1994: 77)

While corruption appears deeply embedded in many Bangladeshi business practices, a reaction to corruption and a focus on good business practices is also a significant aspect of life in the country and one that is, in turn, supported by the global Fair Trade movement.

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[22] Of the five Directors, four are Muslim and one is Hindu. While most of the discussions were around Islamic values, as Bangladesh is predominantly Muslim, Hindu and Bangladeshi values would also influence business practices.

Here, as in Craftfair, the directors expressed support for secular institutions, and felt some unease in attributing a religious foundation for Fair Trade values, though they agreed that cultural and personal values were important.

The application of the standards of Fair Trade, are seen as a way of implementing civil and economic rights in Bangladesh (Meeting, ECOTA, Dhaka, November 2005), where Fair Trade organizations act as advocates for 'fair business practices' by trying to influence both government and the wider business environment in the country. Cultural values that influence and maintain ideas around Fair Trade, "rooted in the specific priorities and circumstances of the region" (Kumar 2005) could be a good foundation for building on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Advocacy about honest business practices and influencing commercial buyers are viewed as important complementary activities for buyers such as Traidcraft (Meeting, Directors, Dhaka, December 2004). While Traidcraft has the capacity to engage in advocacy work, "building capacity at a local level and promoting responsible business" (Traidcraft MAC 2004: 1), many of the SFTOs in Bangladesh would find it hard to support such additional costs and responsibilities. Yet if power relations are to become more equal and the Southern partners have a greater say in the construction of Fair Trade, then such advocacy work should be done by SFTOs as well, both in their own countries and across to Northern constituencies.

5.4.2 The representation of Bithi

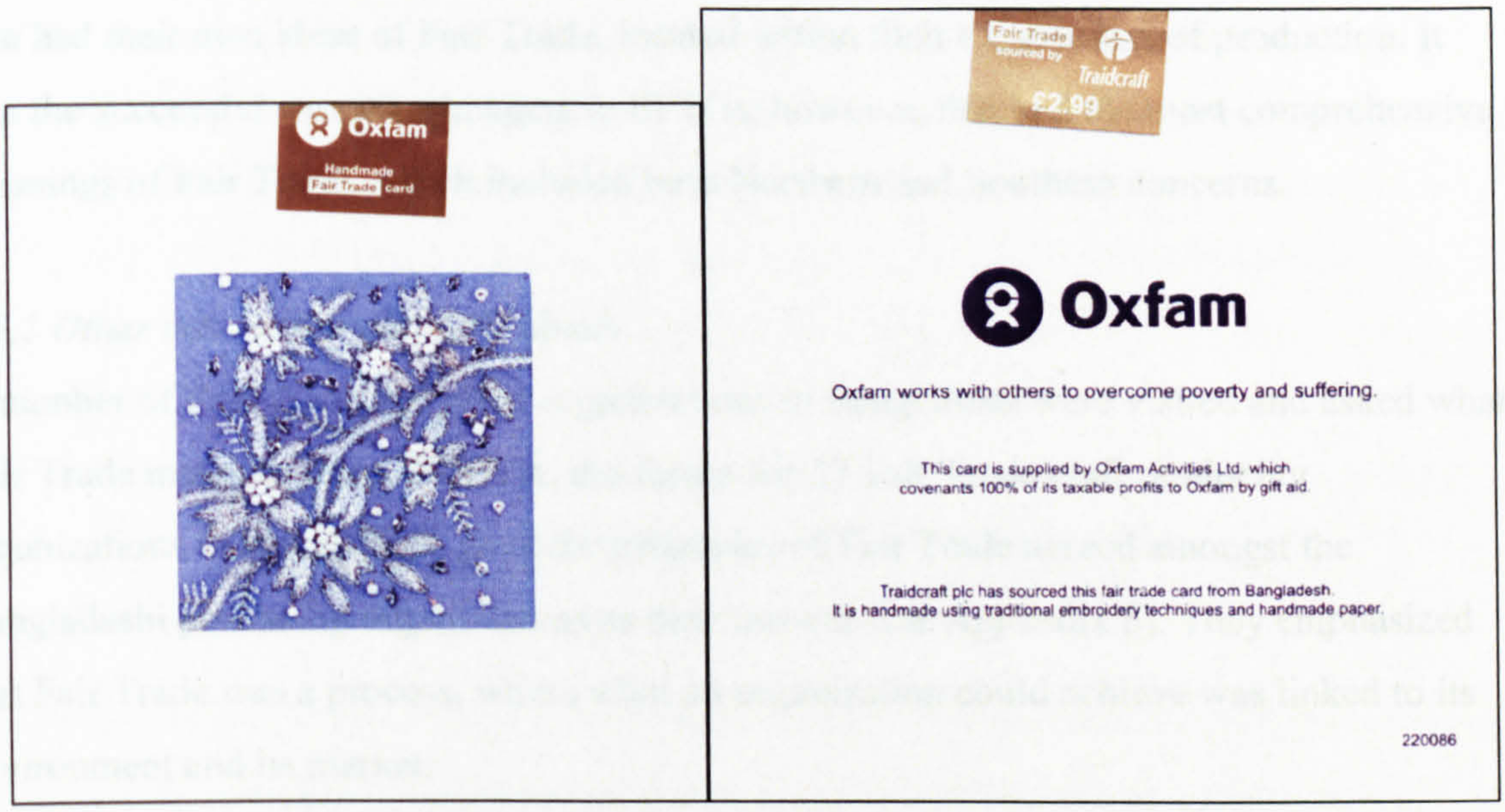
On its website Bithi describes itself as "a manufacturing and exporting company of indigenous handicrafts of Bangladesh.... with the objective of promoting high quality Bangladeshi handicrafts in the global marketplace" www.Bithi-crafts.com,). There is no mention of Fair Trade. Bithi is distinguished by the quality and consistency of its products, and by its ability to find a synergy between Bangladeshi skills with contemporary designs and a modern style to their products. The company focuses solely on exports and sees little potential in selling in local markets (Hinton 2003). The company has five directors (two of whom are designers), and provides work for 600 producers doing embroidery and stitching. The self-assessment reports completed as part of the Traidcraft Partnership Review do discuss Fair Trade. Detail is given on how products are costed, and the benefits to producers in higher wages and good working conditions (Bithi 2004), statements that were generally supported by the research data and visits to the production centres. The review also

highlights how relationships with Fair Trade buyers have become crucial to Bithi's survival, not only in terms of sales but also as a means of receiving business advice and assistance. The report includes a section on problems faced by the company: commercial buyers forcing down prices so they are unable to pay fair wages, the stealing of designs, and a lack of support from either government or other organizations in Bangladesh. If designs are copied, and are of poorer quality, then the customer is "lost forever to Fair Trade" (Meeting, Dhaka, December 2005), since the copy, if sold by another FTO, will be identified with the perceived inability of Fair Trade to maintain quality.

Bithi has participated in European trade fairs where supportive services have been facilitated by NFTOs, such as Traidcraft, and INGOs, such as NORAD. Taking part in trade fairs not only needs good products, but also sophisticated marketing: decoration and layout of the stall, promotional leaflets, and computer based information. It entails significant investment in organizational capacity, and is another example of the knowledge and skills that are shared within Fair Trade partnerships. Bithi looks to partner relationships with Fair Trade buyers as their main source of support and tangible help: design, product development, trade facilitation, management training, market awareness, quality assurance, and finance (Bithi 2004: 9). These services give significant benefits to Bithi as a business, at the same time as they cement cooperative relationships between the seller (Bithi) and the buyer (Traidcraft).

North-South partnerships can of course mask unequal power relationships (Power 2003). Traidcraft would seem to have significant power in this relationship: knowledge and experience of European markets, finance, the influence of cultural intermediators such as designers, and the ultimate decision as to whether to purchase products. However, Traidcraft also has many responsibilities it must meet: to regularly pay its staff even if profits are down, to meet targets, to fund its development work. To fulfil these objectives Traidcraft needs to find reliable, honest partners. Bithi also has power. Traidcraft needs quality products to sell, and products that are produced by a company that is transparent and willing to enter into a Partnership Agreement, host visits by a range of personnel, is open about their business arrangements, and not least, allows their workers to be visited. In this partnership it would seem that the relationship does provide a positive synergy that is in the interest of both partners.

However, the representation of Fair Trade is still firmly in the hands of the Northern partners. For example, when you buy a card produced by Bithi in an Oxfam shop or a Traidcraft catalogue, the advertising will be done by the buyer, and the card will have a label "sourced by Traidcraft" without identifying the company, Bithi. Thus the consumer is left with no knowledge of Bithi, but with a clear idea of the role of Traidcraft and of Oxfam. The institutional demands of developing an organizational identity for Oxfam and Traidcraft has "crowded out" locally derived alternatives and priorities (Power 2003: 183), in this case limiting the ability of Bithi to build up its identity as a successful Fair Trade company. On the card sold in an Oxfam Shop, (Picture 5.1) Oxfam refers to itself four times and to Traidcraft twice. There is no mention of Bithi, the Bangladeshi Fair Trade company that produced the card.



Picture 5.1 Representations of Fair Trade that exclude the SFTO

5.4.3 Conclusions

Bithi has a different though complementary approach to Fair Trade from that of Craftfair, based on values related to business:

- Business has an important role in the development of Bangladesh
- All business should be 'fair'
- Good businesses should influence government and improve the economic environment in general

Concern for the producers is expressed in terms of prices and ability to support their families. There is little overt concern for empowerment or for wider developmental

objectives. Bithi is not involved in Fair Trade networks either within Bangladesh, or globally, and their relationship with other FTOs is problematic, hardly demonstrating the trust or co-operation that is often said to characterise Fair Trade relationships. The discussion of their cards being sold by Fair Trade organizations in the North also demonstrates the constraints within Fair Trade networks for SFTOs, such as Bithi, to develop an institutional brand for their products.

5.5 Understandings of Fair Trade

This section considers a range of meanings associated with Fair Trade, from other SFTOs, business people and NGOs in Bangladesh. The Research Assistants understood Fair Trade primarily in terms of the possibilities of achieving "real progress" for the producers, who in turn had their own ideas of Fair Trade, located within their experiences of production. It was the successful women managers in SFTOs, however, that had the most comprehensive meanings of Fair Trade, which included both Northern and Southern concerns.

5.5.1 Other institutions and individuals

A number of Fair Trade and other organizations in Bangladesh were visited and asked what Fair Trade meant to them. ECOTA, the forum for 27 Fair Trade craft producing organizations in Bangladesh, gave the principles of Fair Trade agreed amongst the Bangladeshi producing organizations as their answer (see Appendix 8). They emphasized that Fair Trade was a process, where what an organization could achieve was linked to its environment and its market:

> No organization in Bangladeshis is yet Fair Trade. There are Fair Trade practitioners, working towards applying the principles. (Meeting, ECOTA, Dhaka, November 2005)

A manager at Bithi further emphasized this view,

> Fair Trade means different things to different people, but it is combining your head and your heart (Research Diary, 24 March 2005),

and, from a designer and entrepreneur who was involved in one of the first Fair Trade companies in Bangladesh,

> Fair Trade is about businesses in Bangladesh getting the right kind of help, and then using their own abilities and skills, but what help they needed changed over

> the years, depending on what was happening in the country. (Research Diary, 2 December 2005)

These are interesting comments because they demonstrate that Fair Trade is understood *as a process* by practitioners in Bangladesh, with recognition of the many complex problems that need to be overcome. Unfortunately, Fair Trade is often understood as a *state to be achieved* in the North, where customers are encouraged to buy only those products that are successful enough to be FLO certified, registered with IFAT, or sold through recognised Fair Trade retailers such as Traidcraft. .

While Craftfair clearly saw Fair Trade as assisting in its goal of reducing poverty and giving poorer people skills to help them cope with poverty (Meeting, Director, Dhaka March 2005), and Bithi saw Fair Trade primarily in terms of good business practices (Research Diary, 27 March 2005), other Fair Trade organizations may have a different emphasis. Aarong, part of BRAC[23], is a large Fair Trade company and is unusual in concentrating on local markets, having five shops in Dhaka, though it also has some export trade. The manager saw Fair Trade as establishing a "brand" with quality products that people would be loyal to and recognise as Bangladeshi:

> Customers would see it as a political act to buy from Aarong, as it is Bangladeshi, and supporting our own craftsmen, rather than Pakistani or Indian goods. The customers would have little interest in Fair Trade as better pay and conditions. (Meeting, Export Manager, Dhaka, November 2004)

The understanding of Fair Trade in Bangladesh is often linked to nationalism; encouraging the growth of successful Bangladeshi businesses, stressing the positive aspects of traditional culture, supporting the development of service organizations. Probatana, a socially responsible company, is involved in a wide range of developmental and agricultural projects, seeing Fair Trade production as a means of supporting indigenous skills and maintaining traditional cultures. The director feels strongly that Fair Trade in Bangladesh should develop its own standards:

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[23] BRAC, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, started in 1971, runs a huge range of programmes including micro-finance, social development, health, education and training. In 2003 BRAC was working in all 64 districts, with 3.73 million members, 99.5 % of whom were women (Halder 2003: 44-45).

> Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Fair Trade registration, and ISO[24] standards are all from outside, but you need to have a locally based ethic. We started with principles first, not imposed ideas. We are Fair Trade. Probatana applies the standards and systems of ISO, but we will not be going for registration any more, it is very expensive. (Meeting, Director, Dhaka, December 2004).

A research and developmental NGO, involved with Trades Unions in Bangladesh, understood Fair Trade primarily as a movement to improve the conditions of workers. They were also critical of Fair Trade organizations for having a narrow focus on wages and prices, suggesting a broader ethic that would include worker participation and developing joint strategies with Trades Unions (Meeting, INCIDEN, Dhaka, November 2004).

Reference to Islamic values was also used as a means of explaining and maintaining Fair Trade activities:

> In Islam they say if your neighbour does not have food, then you should give them some. I am not giving food to the women, but I am teaching them how to have enough food. (Interview 2, CEO, Dhaka, November 2005)

The four Research Assistants who conducted the survey also developed ideas about what Fair Trade meant in the context of Bangladesh. They were not really interested in what consumers thought, or in the critique of global trade. What they wanted to know was, "Did Fair Trade give real benefits to poor people?" (Meeting, Dhaka, March 2005). Here they had mixed views, but broadly felt that Fair Trade was making a contribution to improving the lives of the poor, and was better than charity or development NGOs.

> Fair Trade does not work well on its own; it also needs inputs from the government (roads, education, and sanitation). The wages seem low, but the women need some means of income, and they have few other opportunities (Meeting, Shefali, Dhaka, March 2005)

> Handouts don't work. Many NGOs are too top down. What people need is paid work. It is really important that businesses who say they are Fair Trade are always honest and transparent. (Meeting, Shahed, Dhaka, March 2005)

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[24]ISO refers to the International Organization for Standardization, an NGO, which is a federation of the national standards bodies of 157 countries (including Bangladesh) that sets standards for business, industry and technology. (www.iso.org)

For the Research Assistants, Fair Trade was only fair if it delivered meaningful development to the women. In this, they were quite close to the views of the women producers themselves.

5.5.2 The meaning of Fair Trade to the producers

Except for a few men, employed at the handmade paper plants and the family brothers who run the Terracotta producer group, all the producers interviewed and taking part in the survey were women living in villages, or in poor areas of Dhaka and Mymensingh. Their education levels are low and they have very little contact with the world outside their immediate family and village. It is very hard for them to understand Fair Trade as a social movement for the women have little knowledge of either business or of trade. While these handicraft producers understand the impact of Fair Trade on their own lives they do not generally understand, or show much interest in, the wider movement with regard to trade justice, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), or business practices generally (represented in Table 5.1). The lack of understanding amongst farmers and producers of Fair Trade (Hopkins 2000, Shreck 2005) and the dominance of Northern understandings of trade in ethical trade (Rice 2000, Barrientos and Blowfield 2001), has been discussed in previous research. Such critiques are seeking a Northern representation of Fair Trade, which considers vertical linkages, from producer to buyer to the customer.

The handicraft producers are more interested in horizontal linkages, across their families and within their villages. What Fair Trade means to them is *their personal experience of it.* Being involved in Fair Trade (making handicrafts for a SFTO) means the possibility of earning an income and having the opportunity to belong to a producer group where they can discuss problems (Focus Groups, Producers, Mirpur, Kaliganj, and Kallakair, January 2005). It means a chance to travel, even if only around the village, and to meet with visitors to the village. In comparison to other women they "feel lucky" (Focus Group, Producers, Mirpur, January 2005). These are *important changes to their lives* that they associate with being a Fair Trade producer.

5.5.3 The meanings of 'fair'

The Bangla word '*thik*' was used to communicate the idea of fairness, its meaning being between 'right' and 'just' in English. Occasionally, '*valo*', meaning good, was also used

when discussing the benefits of fairness (Meeting, Research Assistants, January 2005). When asked if their paid work situation was fair (*thik*), the women producers generally answered in terms of payment, whether they thought the payment was enough, or 'fair' in terms of the work they did. However, they also included other ideas into the realm of 'fair' such as the frequency of work (it was unfair to them if they did not have enough orders), the method of payment (waiting too long was unfair), and relationships with FTO staff (it was 'just' and 'fair' that they were treated with respect) (Meeting, Research Assistants, March 2005). 'Fair 'was quite an inclusive term to them, and they could distinguish between their situation (what was fair about it) and what they could see as desirable (thus criticising, and seeing some things that were 'unfair') (Research Assistant, Shahed, personal communication, May 2007). There were many things that were good (*valo*) about their handicraft production, such as the examples given above, the opportunity to learn new skills and to meet new people. The values behind the Fair Trade movement, the roles of SFTOs and NFTOs and the realities of global trade, were outside their knowledge, and many of their statements showed that they did not understand this, and had no way to learn about it, and indeed were perhaps not concerned about it. Their main interest was their world, the financial return for paid work and how people treated them and their families.

Staff within SFTOs did understand what was meant by Fair Trade since they were aware of the partnerships between SFTOs and NFTOs, and could compare the work conditions and payment of their producers to other women in paid work. Those outside FTOs in Bangladesh, the general public understand 'Fair Trade' as a normative concept, not necessarily as a description about a partnership between SFTOs and NFTOs. Fair Trade is seen as

> ...encouraging consumer habits that reward ethical and sustainable trading practices.... you are helping the producers, artisans and the land by giving them all a fair go. (Research Assistant, Nurul, personal communication, May 2007).

A concern for 'social justice' is often what drives Fair Trade; a concern that operates and is relevant to different levels of social interaction. The consumer may be most interested in global trade injustices, the SFTO on the injustices operating at a national level and within the business community, but to the women producers the injustices which they understand and are concerned with, are at the local, family and village level (see Table 5.1).

5.5.4 Understandings of Fair Trade: women managers in SFTOs

The staff of SFTOs are the people who design and develop products, train the producers, visit the groups, provide the development inputs, check quality, and eventually ship the finished products to the UK. They speak of the need to be competitive, to be able to trade on fairer terms and link the performance of the organization to a wider political analysis. They are often protective of the producers and stress their role in improving benefits to them (Research Diary, 20 November 2005). In my interviews with women managers in SFTOs I was given comprehensive views of what Fair Trade is that often encompassed the local, national and global meanings attributed to the movement:

> Fair Trade is not only about a fair price, but it is to evaluate everything. Who is doing it, availability, human rights, and what she likes to do. It is fair treatment too. (Interview 1, Head of Education, Dhaka, November 2005)

- *So, you see Fair Trade as helping the individual producer and also changing the society?*
  Yes, both are important, the society and the individual. There should be justice, in paying a fair wage, but also there should be more equality between different people who work. (Interview 4, Export Manager, Dhaka, December 2005)

5. 6 Conclusion – the multiple meanings of Fair Trade

The argument developed in this chapter has centred on several, interlinking themes. First, the constructions of meanings that inform Fair Trade are different depending on individual experience and the scale of attention, the local, the national or the global. I have used my research findings to illustrate the varied meanings that are associated with Fair Trade. For example, Traidcraft always had a goal of 'trade not aid' to alleviate poverty, but then found it was involved in building sustainable commercial organizations in producer countries as part of its institutional objectives. Craftfair wants to "organise the rural poor" and to help them to be come "self-reliant", whereas Bithi sees Fair Trade as primarily influencing the business community. The principles of Fair trade adopted by ECOTA (Appendix 8) cover quite complex social goals. Understanding these meanings is important because they influence the practices of Fair Trade, the subject of the next chapter, and how development and 'fairness' is defined and how it will be evaluated (Chapters 7, 8, and 9). Bangladeshis appear to be primarily concerned with Fair Trade as a means of national development,

changes they want to see in traditional culture, in national governance, and in local business practices. While individuals involved in Fair Trade in Bangladesh may be concerned about inequalities in global trade, their main focus is on changes within Bangladesh.

Secondly, these meanings are represented in particular ways for particular purposes, and in these representational processes Northern individuals (customers) and organizations (the buyers) have far more power and reach than individuals (producers) and organizations (the sellers) in Bangladesh. Representations to promote sales and/or to engage in debates about trade, often include Fair Trade value positions that become understood as claims of what is being achieved. For example, because Fair Trade is represented as wanting to empower producers, it is thought *to have* empowered producers. Understanding the complexities of Fair Trade should be less from promotional and normative information, and based more on research and monitoring systems that are used for learning. The focus on individual producers in representational materials – with links to the NFTOs and the consumer – leaves out the crucial role played by the SFTOs in achieving economic and developmental goals.

Finally, Fair Trade appears to be understood more as a process, *a becoming*, in Bangladesh, whereas Fair Trade in the North is increasingly being seen as a state that has been achieved by particular products and suppliers. This can be linked to the complexity of their goals (improving business generally, achieving equitable development) compared to the goals of Fair Trade in the North (paying a fair price and having good working conditions) which can be measured more easily. Using research and monitoring for learning, will be difficult, given the need for certification and registration that are based on the fulfilment of the values given to Fair Trade, and 'failure' to achieve aims would have a direct impact on the economic sustainability of SFTOs. SFTOs and producers have to be allowed a stronger voice in how Fair Trade is defined, the meanings that are given to it, what development is and how it is achieved, and how impact is assessed. Thus, Fair Trade networks need not only vertical accountability (upwards to the NFTO and consumers, now given by certification), but also downwards, from the NFTO to the SFTO and producers, and horizontal, across societies and relationships.

Chapter 6 Institutional practices: the production and regulation of Fair Trade

> ... then I came to this handicraft organization [a SFTO] and I was in charge of production...The job gave me the opportunity to learn, I learnt about Fair Trade, it was different to normal business, I saw that I liked the principles. My goal changed from wanting to work in a MNC to working in handicrafts, for a 'fair way of living life'. I have a fair life, why shouldn't the producers? (Interview 3, CEO, SFTO, December 2005)

6.1 Introduction: institutional practices

This chapter considers the institutional practices and social relationships that create and maintain Fair Trade production, in particular, how such practices and relationships are understood in Bangladesh. The discussion is framed around two questions: *What* makes Fair Trade happen? *How* is it achieved? Section 6.2 reviews the 'ideal' of partnership, Section 6.3 focuses on the partnership between Northern Fair Trade Organizations (NFTOs), especially Traidcraft, and Southern Fair Trade Organizations (SFTOs) in Bangladesh and Section 6.4 considers the relationship between the SFTOs and their producers. The landscape of Fair Trade is explored, consideration given to the different objectives that people have depending on their level and place of involvement, which in turn, produces different outcomes. The sense of this exploration is that the evaluation of Fair Trade, and of its impact, depends very much on one's standpoint, and many concurrent, and multiple evaluations are possible.

There are several themes that run through this chapter. First, the 'ideal' of partnership promotes specific kinds of institutional practices that inform both relationships of production and the delivery of developmental goals, the 'ideal' acting as a form of regulation on organizations and individuals. Being loyal to such an 'ideal' also has implications for conducting research, in that, generally, people in Bangladesh were unwilling to criticise partners, and instead were circumspect, diplomatic, or understanding of shortcomings. This reticence is also related to cultural differences: direct criticism is considered impolite or leading to a loss of face; remaining on good terms with partners is of paramount importance. However, and secondly, my research supports the view that cooperative practices of partnership do bring significant benefits to SFTOs. Thirdly, and connected to the previous two themes, the achievement of developmental goals is largely in the hands of SFTOs, so understanding their philosophies, priorities, and ways of doing things are perhaps more important to assessing development than a focus on the global

messages of Fair Trade, such as the payment of a 'fair wage'. How a fair wage is implemented and within what types of relationships, as I will discuss, is as important to social justice and achieving developmental goals as the actual level of pay.

6.2 The ideal of partnership

6.2.1 Partnership, cooperation and trust

The basic principles which guide Fair Trade are the enactment of international trade partnerships, making a reasonable profit while achieving social goals (Grimes 2005: 239). Partnerships between buyers and sellers are the preferred means to achieve the fairer wage, improved working conditions, and attention to environmental impact. FTOs see themselves as engaged in building "the institutional networks needed to transform policies required to ensure social justice in the globalization process" (Nash 2005: 4). This is demonstrated in the trust within partnerships that allow for the transfer of financial investment and business services to trading organizations in producer countries. Both formal rules and informal constraints (North 1990) affect business practices, the type of cooperation, and the ways that knowledge is shared in order to improve commercial success. FTOs try to encourage the development of new institutions built on a Weberian model of impersonal power, bound by rules and accountable decision making (Morrison 1995: 300). In practice, this is very difficult to achieve. Many institutional practices in Bangladesh are based on personal power, and it is very challenging to foster impersonal organizations.

> People think personally, not organizationally. When people complain or want something, it is for themselves, they do not care or think about the implications for others, but as a manager you have to do this. (Meeting, Director, SFTO, Shreepur, November 2005)

Staff working in SFTOs have to negotiate with new forms of behaviour as traditional practices change to accommodate modernity. Both men and women are taking on new roles, and engaging in new types of relationships, as identified by the woman education officer in the following quotation:

> I was speaking to some of the men... they agreed that it was better that their women could now discuss, though it was a change from the culture and from their own mothers' roles.... the men do help, we rely on their help, for example to carry the raw materials to the women, and to arrange the vehicles when they bring the products to Dhaka. (Meeting, Education Officer, Craftfair, Dhaka, February 2005)

Partnerships within Fair Trade can be seen as networks of disparate groups and organizations at many different levels and sites, trying to foster cooperation to achieve common goals, taking on "the urgent responsibility to act in the world, and the patient responsibility to acknowledge otherness" (Barnett 2004: 503). Cooperation contributes to the development of shared knowledge which influences the ways in which they deal with everyday decisions. Many Fair Trade activities are firmly located in the 'local' through producer groups and the impacts on communities; at the same time, ideas and values are shared with other people in the city of Dhaka, and in other countries; new ideas are dynamic, taking place in a range of locations that influence each other (Thrift 1999: 310). While Fair Trade has been theorised as "mainly driven by ethical institutions from the North" (Dicken, Kelly et al 2001: 103), my research challenges this simplification and demonstrates how Fair Trade is influenced and driven by ethical institutions in producing countries as well. For example, SFTOs in Bangladesh were active in a successful campaign to ban plastic bags (see Section 5.3.2). Jute bags, an alternative produced by SFTOs, are now being sold to Fairtrade towns in the UK where people are similarly interested in environmental concerns.

How do partnerships operate when there is conflict over particular values? A good example of this is the vexed question of the use of children in craft production. Here, the cultural norms and 'ways of doing things' between the UK and Bangladesh are in conflict. The Fair Trade movement is opposed to the use of child labour, but many organizations in Bangladesh, including some FTOs, view supervised employment of children as often the best option for some children and their families, who would otherwise face destitution (Section 3.5.4). The 'ideal' is that Fair Trade partnerships help to acknowledge "conflicts of values and to work towards establishing new ones", what Wempe refers to as a new form of ethical entrepreneurship (Wempe 2005: 217). The interests of the powerful Northern organizations often prevail, however, but are sometimes able to accommodate Southern concerns. In Bangladesh, several SFTOs said they abide by ILO Conventions on the use of child labour[25], but allow younger children to accompany parents to production centres if

[25] ILO Convention No. 182 commits countries to take action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. ILO Convention No.138 sets out a framework to achieve the longer term objective of the abolition of child labour. (www.ilo.org)

necessary, and also provide some paid training for older children who are not attending school (Meeting, TDH Manager, Patuakhali, February 2005).

Tallontire highlights the necessary conditions and structure for partnerships to be successful (Table 2.2). These criteria represent the 'ideal' of partnerships. My research suggests that the FTOs move along a continuum in regard to each of these criteria, meeting their own objectives, at the same time as they endeavour to maintain constructive relationships. Concerns to build capacity in SFTOs and to increase accountability between partners (Tallontire 1999, 2000) have driven many of the practices identified in Section 6.3. Such practices of institution building (Ronchi 2002) are often hidden, embedded within the long-term partnership.

6.2.2 Cultures of production within FTOs

Traditionally, production has been seen as the main site of cultural formation. The Frankfurt School saw the social and the cultural as being determined by the economic, where economic systems produce the kinds of social relationships that allowed the capitalist economy to function and grow. More recently, cultural studies, anthropology, geography, and development studies have questioned these assumptions and argue for viewing the cultural and economic as intrinsically interlinked, where economic activity can only be conducted through systems of shared meanings and norms (Sayer 1997: 17). The Circuit of Culture is one critique of the economic deterministic approach to culture represented in the Frankfort School, and has been used in this thesis (particularly in Chapters 5 and 6) to analyse the cultural context of Fair Trade. Exploring the institutional cultures within the FTOs, and between FTOs and their producers, helps to uncover the policies and practices that are intended to improve methods of production and contribute to wider social objectives.

The culture of the workplace within FTOs is specifically constructed to include ideas of cooperation, tolerance, and compassion, in addition to the need to know and understand competitive markets. This ordering of the workplace (du Gay 2000) is achieved through such practices as regular staff meetings, role definitions, and staff training. Other examples of such practices within FTOs in my study include: Annual Reports which emphasize social

goals in addition to the traditional financial accounts, Social Accounts which make clear the range of stakeholders they engage with, Learning Weeks for staff development, and regular visits between organizations. Certain ideas are encouraged (cooperation, transparency, application of religious and political beliefs) and others are seen as incompatible (excessive profits, exploitation, secrecy, ignoring the environment). In addition to the ordering that is taking place within organizations as a result of the application of the ideals of Fair Trade, business practices are also influenced by the cultural norms of the wider society, "the opportunities thrown up by the basic institutional framework of customs, religious precepts and formal rules" (North 1991: 108-109) which influences what is seen as acceptable and appropriate behaviour.

The business practices within Fair Trade partnerships are unusual and show how the values of the movement have influenced how trade is conducted. During my research I witnessed a number of 'alternative business practices' attempting to achieve "the delicate balancing act between a cooperative ideology and its practice" (Nash 2000: 176). A higher than market price was paid to producers, when usually prices and wages are driven down by commercial buyers. Whenever possible production is done in Bangladesh, such as making products from handmade paper (HMP) or jute fibre, so that the added-value profit can stay within the country. Money was lent without collateral or before sales, allowing the SFTOs to buy materials and to pay their producers. The product is then sold at a 'fair'[26] price (if sold by a Fair Trade retailer) rather than the highest price that the market will bear. Decisions in Fair Trade companies are largely made according to their mission, influenced by previous decisions and the organizational context (Davies and Crane 2003: 91), as well as a shifting moral context depending on where in the process they are acting. Neither the FTO making the products nor the buyer retailing the product is only interested in maximising profit. There is much more going on within these trading relationships than rational economic behaviour.

Thus, another question is why people stay loyal to these types of relationships. Part of the answer is that individuals working in FTOs enjoy and value the range of personal relationships that are possible in these networks.

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[26] A 'fair price' in this context usually means that the price includes a reasonable, but not exorbitant profit.

> The partnership process allows for the growth of long term relationships, recognizing a friend who 'hangs in there', a personal relationship, that is a very powerful experience. (Interview, Development Co-ordinator, Traidcraft, Gateshead, October 2004)

> I want to influence my company.... I also want to influence other businesses. I stay loyal to good buyers.... If we do something wrong they tell us, they say what they want, and show us how to improve. (Interview 3, Director, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005)

At both a personal and institutional level, additional economic gains are foregone in favour of what employees see as equally valuable: shared personal experiences and working towards shared goals. Enjoying and valuing what they do is as significant as achieving a financial return. The 'ideal' of partnership is a form of regulation on staff within FTOs, and on the relationship between FTOs. The next section discusses particular practices that help to maintain these partnerships.

6.3 The practices of partnership

It has been argued (Hayes 2006) that the most important impact of Fair Trade is its contribution to the building of sustainable FTOs in producer countries. Such institutions, which combine financial success and good working conditions, have been highlighted as an important aspect of pro-poor development (Lindahl 2003, Palley 2005). The following sections discuss examples of institutional practices identified by SFTOs in Bangladesh that are important to achieving sustainability. These include maintaining commercial viability (continuing to receive orders during times of change), assistance with product development and achieving higher standards of production, and the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

6.3.1 Maintaining commercial viability through cooperation

A particularly important aspect of the culture of Fair Trade organizations is the construction and maintenance of trading partnerships; between North and South, between business and NGOs, between producers and consumers. However, it is necessary to interrogate the idea of partnership, for the term can cover many different types of relationship. A possible typology to analyse such relationships is based on the "relative bargaining position of the partners", whether relations are based on cooperation, compliance, coalition, dependence with influence, direct control, or structural control (Van Tulder and Ruigrok 1997: 134). The ideal of partnerships between Fair Trade organizations would include aspects of

cooperation, compliance and coalition, where relations of dependence would be actively discouraged (for example through trade facilitation) and means found to improve the situation of the less powerful. Staff at Traidcraft are aware that the language of partnership does not necessarily reflect the reality of the relationship.

> Our relationship with SFTOs is a long term relationship, but it is not really a 'partnership'.... It is not equal.... For example, SFTOs are not involved in the development of NFTOs, or their strategies.(Discussion, Staff, Traidcraft, Gateshead, January 2007)

Competition is the assumed mode of trading relationships within markets and is deemed to bring benefits such as improved quality, greater choice, and increasing efficiency. In Fair Trade networks, competition is not ignored, but "is managed so that everyone can make some gains" (Research Diary, Dhaka, 7 December 2005). The SFTOs consistently felt that cooperation between NFTOs and themselves had also achieved improved quality, choice and efficiency. For example, the development of a new product involves designers from Traidcraft working with designers and artisans in Bangladesh, where expertise in fashion trends, marketing, and processes of production is shared.

> The artisans have the ability to make the products, but they need to have market information and to understand quality... once a design is accepted we work out the critical points in the production process, where value is added, and help them to monitor this so the quality is right... from planning, to design, to storage. (Interview, Quality Control Manager, Gateshead, September 2004)

Improvements to quality take time: sometimes producers need to be taught new skills, or those doing the checking and packaging have to meet higher standards. Eventually a product is agreed that is culturally neither wholly British nor completely Bangladeshi, involving a range of processes where people appear to be learning from each other. Staff in such FTOs consciously use their personal influence and skills as a means to redress dominant economic and social structures.

> Listening, respecting each other, passing on practical skills, someone who is there, who is concerned, helps to redress the power imbalance. (Interview, Partnership Co-ordinator, Gateshead, September 2004)

Social relationships underpin the ideal of partnerships, and people who work for the Fair Trade organizations appear loyal to those relationships. Such relationships will involve different priorities, depending on one's standpoint and position in the supply chain, but the

salient point is that the staff appear committed to making difficulties explicit and then dealing with them in a constructive way. The following quotations illustrate the difference in priorities which have to be 'worked on': the NFTO emphasizing the social relationship, while the SFTO emphasizes the maintenance of orders.

> It is so difficult to get the right type of relationship with our partners…We might want a long-term relationship, but the partners sometimes want to know 'an answer' and see less value in long-term commitments. (Interview, Product Development Manager, Traidcraft, UK, September 2004)
>
> We want more orders, advance payments, regular orders or ones where we could plan, and more lead-time to produce the goods. (Interview, Manager, Mymensingh, March 2005)

When problems emerge, such as shortcomings in the product quality or in the production process, then the long-term relationship is the vehicle to introduce change while maintaining a commercial relationship so the seller and the buyer can survive. As the following quotation suggests, each partner has responsibilities that need to be met if the partnership is to work effectively.

> Recently UNICEF rejected a shipment worth £120,000 from one of our Fair Trade suppliers in Bangladesh. It had not been packaged with silicon gel, so the products were not in top quality. We would not do that – reject a shipment, we would work with the SFTO and make sure they knew what was necessary. But, the SFTO also needs to be proactive, and to tell the NFTO what they need, and when they have problems. (Interview, Manager, Gateshead, July 2004)

Renard argues that the power of a Fair Trade partnership "emanates from the social relationships that sustain it" (Renard 2002: 11), which he characterises as the movement's "social capital". This social capital is then used to maintain and improve the partnerships, and to develop second level organizations (Nigh 2002) such as the Asian Fair Trade Forum (AFTF), as well as to establish and maintain alliances with other organizations. The examples in this section illustrate how the partnership process provides important gains to both the buyer and the seller that, in turn, help to maintain the cooperative spirit of the relationship. The buyers will often provide the services needed by small organizations to develop and to compete globally: advance payment so that materials can be bought; advice and training on design, product development, quality control; and trade facilitation (meetings with Craftfair and Bithi, Craftfair Annual Reports and Bithi Partnership Review 2004). The buyers, such as Traidcraft, also get something from the partnership: products

that can be sold with a 'Fair Trade identity'. Such institutional cooperation appears to strengthen the commercial viability of each organization.

6.3.2 Dealing with corruption and high transaction costs

Another important contribution of the Fair Trade model is the application of honest and transparent business practices. In a recent report of business practices, on a National Corporate Responsibility Index, Bangladesh scored particularly poorly (Zadek, Raynard et al 2005). The report argues that responsible business practices are improving in many industrial countries, and increasingly, compliance to labour and environmental standards is important for market access for developing countries, leading corporate responsibility to be an important driver of competitiveness (Zadek, Raynard et al 2005). Moore has argued that "the elimination of monopoly rents in local markets" (Moore 2004: 19) is one of the most important impacts of Fair Trade, leading to the improvement of markets generally.

Fair Trade networks can help businesses, even in a context as difficult as Bangladesh, to achieve higher standards of corporate responsibility by eliminating corruption and overcharging within supply chains, thus reducing production costs. Challenging the power of such intermediaries will also provide "greater benefits to rural communities than the more typical chains" (Kanji 2004: 5).

Because Fair Trade partnerships are aware of their supply chains, and often control many of the processes (distribution, shipping, warehousing, transportation), they are better able to enforce standards related to working conditions, and integrate ethical consideration into buying practices. There were many examples of cooperative relationships in Bangladesh that were based on establishing honest supply chains. SFTOs in Bangladesh often buy from other SFTOs and cooperate over administrative services. Bithi orders the handmade paper for its cards from two HMP SFTOs. Craftfair provides shipping and export facilities to other SFTOs in Bangladesh. Banglapaper was loaned the money to invest in new equipment by another SFTO in Bangladesh, a business that could be seen as a competitor since they also produced HMP (Meeting, Manager, Mymensingh, March 2005). However, there is also the realization that more could be done:

> The many handicraft organizations do not talk much to each other.
> There is no time. We do not interact, but it would be better if we did.
> (Interview 3, Woman Director, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005)

While the normative position in Fair Trade is cooperation, many organizations do not want to work together – indeed many see reasons why they should not cooperate with each other. For example, some Bangladeshi craft organizations are competing with each other to get orders from the same buyers. Bithi has had bitter experience of the "stealing of designs and skilled staff" by other organizations, and the managers see the government as "corrupt, offering no support and wanting to charge for everything" (Meeting, Directors, Bithi, Dhaka, December 2004). There is little protection from copyright laws or the means to enforce improving standards. In a recent review of handicraft production in Bangladesh, ECOTA found that "the craft sector has suffered from weak institutional and political support… and massive copyright infringement" (ECOTA 2005: 77). Instead, Bithi look to themselves and FTOs as their main source of support.

> Our competitors steal our designs. Who helps us? Our buyers, our Fair Trade buyers. We look to them for information and for support.... Also our producers help us, they work hard and do whatever is necessary to complete an order on time. (Meeting, Director, Bithi, Dhaka, March 2005)

Craftfair identified similar problems, in particular the difficulty of competing with organizations that called themselves 'fair' but were not adopting Fair Trade principles.

> We have the problem of our designs being copied, and of organizations who use exploitative practices while using the label 'Fair Trade', who then undercut our prices. (Meeting, Export Manager, Craftfair, Dhaka, December 2004)

Many buyers continue to force down prices, both commercial and some Fair Trade buyers, particularly ones who sell within Bangladesh (Meeting, Bithi, Dhaka, March 2005). This has the effect of limiting their social goal of providing a good wage to producers. Papernow, the HMP supplier to Bithi, also complained of buyers suddenly reducing orders when prices were increased to reflect the increased cost of raw materials (Meeting, Manager, Muktagacha, February 2007). Some of these practices are dishonest (claiming to be Fair Trade when little attempt is made to apply the standards), or an abuse of power (suddenly withdrawing orders). Trade facilitation, helping SFTOs to find a range of buyers, is one response to improve the bargaining power of SFTOs. SFTOs also benefit from NFTOs buying directly from small companies such as Bithi and Craftfair, and thus cutting out 'buying houses' and exploitative middlemen (Meeting, Directors, Dhaka, March 2005), which reduces unnecessary transaction costs and additional charges.

SFTOs often have to deal with corruption, poor business practices, and 'cheating' on a daily basis. Fair Trade partnerships help by having some control over the supply chains, offering important services to each other, and paying prices that cover uneconomic but socially responsible activity. However, there are also examples of competitive relations, and recognition that it is difficult to always maintain the high principles of the movement.

6.3.3 Achieving higher standards

In order to continue to trade under a Fair Trade identity, producer organizations have to continually meet higher and higher standards.

> In the 70s just to trade with Bangladesh was Fair Trade, now it is different, now there are many more standards that can and should be met. (Interview, Sourcing and Development Manager, Gateshead, July 2004)

Buyers such as Traidcraft invest in their partners through the services offered by their specialised staff. This includes advice on design and product development, quality control, organizational development, and market access information, and trade facilitation, linking producing organizations to other buyers. These services provide the basis for competitive products, institutional sustainability, and financial resources for new technologies so that producer organizations can grow and develop. This aspect of Fair Trade networks has been well documented (Littrell and Dickson 1999, Rice 2000, Raynolds 2002a, 2002b, Nicholls and Opal 2005). Financial stability is essential if other wide goals are to be met.

Another aspect of the partnership process is the assistance given in order for producing organizations to gain Fair Trade certification (FLO) and registration (IFAT) (Section 5.2.3). SFTOs and their producers need time and investment in order to reach the standards of certification and the capacity to deliver in sufficient quantities for large orders. The Fair Trade buyer, such as Traidcraft, is crucial during this process, often taking years, when companies are trying to improve standards and quality. Traidcraft's Partnership Documentation Process (Section 5.2.1) was initiated to identify strengths and weaknesses (Interview, Partnership Co-ordinator, Traidcraft, Gateshead, August 2005) and to plan how to address problems, a formal means of regulating the conduct between two organizations. Although "working with suppliers" is identified as the preferred means to improvement (Meeting, Bithi, Dhaka, March 2005), such a process can make significant demands on SFTOs, for example, the cost of producing social audits, providing information in reports,

and organizing visits to their producers. Meeting national and international standards involves significant institutional capacity, not just in having a sustainable organization financially, but also having the staffing capacity to fulfil additional responsibilities.

6.3.4 Sharing knowledge and expertise

An important feature of Fair Trade networks is their ability to "create an intensive exchange of information among those involved" (Buchler 2001: 40). The sharing of information within Fair Trade networks takes many forms and operates at different levels (Scherer-Haynes 2007), and includes ideas about product development, business services and organizational improvements. It can be formal, in training events and visits by experts, or informal discussions in a social setting. There is learning by doing, practiced by many artisans, and learning through discussions, a new experience for many women producers.

> We learn new skills.... we share our problems with each other, we learn from the meetings and we share this with our neighbours.... (Focus Group, Kaliganj, January 2005)

Within Fair Trade networks it can be "difficult to define where market power and decisions on new initiatives lie", partly because the interactions and sharing of information tends to facilitate joint decision-making (Page 2003: 21). Attempts to improve working conditions, a responsibility acknowledged by both SFTOs and NFTOs includes shared knowledge about current conditions, the cultural context and recent progress in improvements, as well as an understanding of institutional capacity and willingness to address change.

Knowledge is also shared in order to improve products and increase competitiveness. Research into coffee highlighted the sharing of information and expertise across organizations, as well as the consistent feeling that market information was often inadequate (Taylor 2002: 5) and that it was, in practice, difficult to share information across producer cooperatives (Taylor 2002: 12). In the handicraft sector, it also appeared that it was easier to share information between NFTOs and SFTOS, than amongst SFTOs, although these exchanges did occur through visits, training programmes, international networks (IFAT, FLO), and regional forums. ECOTA (the Fair Trade Forum in Bangladesh) runs joint programmes so that SFTOs can learn from each other.

> ECOTA was started by Oxfam and Caritas... I joined in their programmes.... People came to Craftfair to be trained; it was a very practical training – supported

> by a Dutch organization. We have many visitors, they take ideas from us. In these ways we give assistance to the small organizations because we want more businesses to be fair. (Interview 4, Export Manager, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005)

ECOTA has completed several evaluations, been involved in providing services to SMEs, and conducted studies on 'best practice' that have been shared amongst the organizations (ECOTA document, undated). Such studies demonstrate a desire to learn more about the handicraft sector in Bangladesh, and how Fair Trade organizations[27] can operate within that context. The Director of Craftfair stressed how important it is to develop policies that are particularly relevant to Asian Fair Trade (Meeting, Managing Director Craftfair, Dhaka, December 2005), including initiatives to increase trade within Asia. Attempts to influence business practices generally in Bangladesh support similar moves in the North to mainstream Fair Trade products and to diversify the buyers for SFTOs. This is not only about finding new markets, and thus more sales, but also an attempt to "share learning and to evolve and develop new approaches" (Redfern and Snedker 2002: 2)

A helpful way to analyse the flow and use of information is through a framework developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) who argue that tacit and explicit knowledge[28] are complementary, and knowledge "is created and expanded through social interaction between them" (Chataway and Wield 2000: 810). They suggest that many Western organizations emphasize externalization to the exclusion of the other modes of interaction, whereas in Japan all four modes are used (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995: 8-10). The application of the framework helps to explain the ability of Fair Trade networks to share information and draw various actors into the process of knowledge making, where traditional boundaries between specialists, employees, local groups, and the generalist are breaking down (Amin and Cohendet: 2004). Figure 6.1 summarizes the various forms of information sharing that I observed during my research, demonstrating the use of all four modes for sharing knowledge. Examples of such activities are given in this chapter, and quotations, such as the previous two, one from a manager and one from a focus group with producers, demonstrate the personal responses to such activities.

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[27] Fair Trade handicrafts are only a small part of the handicraft sector. Estimates vary, and it is difficult to find total figures on either Fair Trade producers or handicraft workers. See Section 8.3.5

[28] Tacit knowledge is rooted in practice, learning by doing, and experiential. Explicit knowledge is formal knowledge, often based on writing, reading and structured discussion.

	Tacit knowledge	*Explicit knowledge*
tacit	**SOCIALIZATION** ***Tacit to tacit knowledge*** ***Interaction and observation*** • informal meetings at forums • partnership visits to Bangladesh • visits by SFTOs and producers to the UK • informal discussions in producer groups • observing visitors, and visitors observing working conditions	**EXTERNALIZATION** ***Tacit to explicit interaction*** ***Formalising tacit knowledge*** • informal training • evaluations and monitoring • producing manuals • instruction and supervision by skilled workers • life experience brought to bare on institutional decision making
explicit	**INTERNALIZATION** ***From explicit to tacit*** ***Learning by doing*** • learning new craft skills • becoming more skilled through practice • interactive visits with designers • sharing experiences • visits by producers to Dhaka	**COMBINATION** ***From explicit to explicit, different types of explicit information brought together*** • product development workshops • quality control visits • financial reports • formal training • use of internet sources

Source: adapted from Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995, Figure 3.2, page 62

Figure 6.1 The four modes of learning applied to the sharing of knowledge within Fair Trade networks

Interviews and observation suggest that the negative aspects of information-sharing within NGO networks, dominated by audit trails, attainment of performance indicators, misrepresentation and evaluations linked to additional funding (Townsend and Townsend 2004) are less of a problem in Fair Trade networks in Bangladesh, possibly because of the commitment to long term relationships, the dependence on each other for economic viability, and a lack of demand, as yet, for performance indicators. Such knowledge transfers are often linked to changes in practice, to improve the prospects for institutional growth and development. For example, Traidcraft undertook a study of handmade paper production in Bangladesh (Hinton 2003), which contributed to both institutional capacity building and the development of better products. The process of doing the investigation was also significant as the forum held by Hinton was the first time that the different HMP organizations had met together to share concerns (Hinton 2003: 33).

6.3.5 Conclusion: the practices of partnership

This section has given examples of some of the practices and social relationships which contribute to the long-term partnership between Traidcraft and selected SFTOs in

Bangladesh. Many of the advantages identified in previous studies, such as the provision of services, financial support, time to improve on standards, sharing of knowledge, and development of second level organizations (see Tables 2.1 and 2.3) have also been found to be important in the Fair Trade handicraft sector in Bangladesh. Except for the Partnership Review Process implemented by Traidcraft, there is a lack of systems to monitor the various practices, and such monitoring activities are not seen as a priority by SFTOs. Some of the previous criticisms (Section 2.2), such as the limited accountability of NFTOs and the need for more research, could be true in this situation. One area where some SFTOs wanted to be more involved was in defining the objectives for developing fairer trade, and in selecting the criteria and processes for certification and registration.

6.4 The relationship between SFTOs and their producers

Much of the research into Fair Trade has highlighted the relationship between the NFTO and the SFTO, and also tried to assess the impact on producers. However, less is known about the relationship between SFTOs and their producers and employees. This research did attempt to understand both the institutional perspectives (meanings and practices) and the views of the producers. These relationships varied, though all four of the SFTOs had specific institutional arrangements that benefited their workers, and these arrangements were embedded in social relationships that I was able, in part, to observe. I will discuss the relationship between producers and FTOs in relation to:

- the process of production
- the provision of employee welfare services and benefits
- the delivery of wider developmental goals

6.4.1 The process of production

At Craftfair the artisans are organised into producer groups. At the time of the research there were 4,210 members organised into 156 producer groups (Craftfair Annual Report 2005-2006: 8). The handicrafts are made from a range of natural products including jute, grasses, terracotta, and are mostly made at home, although there are three production centres serving several producer groups. The terracotta producers are organised around extended families, where the male relatives organise and manage the design and production of products. The Production Department at Craftfair is responsible for assigning orders to

individual producer groups, making sure the order is suited to their particular skills. Producers are responsible for bringing the finished handicrafts to the Dhaka office, where they go through a quality control process, " the meticulous work involved in checking every item made, and then attaching the correct labels" (Research Diary, January 2005). Once the products are approved for export, they are packed and shipped. These producers have thus gained some insight into the world of business, in that they see the different stages of production and the responsibilities of a range of personnel.

Craftfair has to be economically viable, but its main aims are associated with the development of disadvantaged women who are selected to become artisans because of their poverty, their lack of effective family networks, or their membership of marginalised ethnic groups (Meeting, Craftfair Trustee, October 2004). The organization provides part-time work for a large number of women (Meeting, Director, Dhaka, March 2005) rather than a full-time income to a smaller number of women. In this way they hope to spread the developmental impact, but it limits the impact of a fair wage, since payment is only a part-time wage. In addition, Craftfair has a policy to encourage the 'retirement' of older women "once they have empowered themselves" (Meeting, Education Officer, Dhaka, March 2005), and to bring new women into producer groups. Many artisans are in the group for their working life and resist attempts to have them leave, as earning and being a member of a producer group is important to them.

> Culturally, the women in this country are ruled by their fathers, their husbands, and then their sons. When they are in the group, earning, then they feel they have some power and some influence in the household. (Meeting, Craftfair Education Officer, Dhaka, November 2005)

Even when women retire, however, they sometimes maintain the link to the group, for example as a trainer of new producers. It also seems that their status, while no longer that of a paid worker, remains relatively high in the community.

> When they retire from the groups, the women are still respected... they maintain their higher status in the village, and often get involved in social works. They maintain their mobility, and go to market, they say "now we can go here and there and have no fear, we can manage, to organise the vehicle and talk to other people". (Meeting, Craftfair Education Officer, Dhaka, November 2005)

Organising individual producers into groups has both economic and social functions: it acts as the centre of production for skills training, quality control and new product development, and it provides a means to introduce development inputs and educational activities on a regular basis.

Bithi organises their production in a different way. In order to maintain the necessary level of quality their products are either made at their Dhaka premises (tailoring, some embroidery, and construction of cards) or in production centres with supervisors (embroidery, stitching, mirror work and appliqué). At the time of the research, Bithi had 32 employees (mainly tailors and packers) and 600 producers at four production sites. The producers are paid a piece rate and the aim is to pay 60tk to all women for an eight hour day (Partnership Review, Meeting, Dhaka, March 2005) and 40tk for girls in training. As 50tk[29] is the minimum wage and many employers pay below this for a day's work, this is considered a good wage[30]. In 2004/5 Bithi was working at 60% capacity, but in 2007, production was nearer 100%, due to a large order with a High Street Chain Store, facilitated and supported by Traidcraft, and the proposed daily rate is moving towards 71 taka per day (Meeting, Director, Badda, February 2007). The five Directors are responsible for design, marketing, finance, quality control, and maintaining contact with the woman producers. They travel to the centres to demonstrate new products, to select new members, to provide materials, and to arrange the collection of finished products and the payment to producers. The supervisors keep the records and maintain contact with the Directors, so the handicraft producers have little opportunity to develop additional group skills, or have new experiences such as the Craftfair workers, but the production centres provide a congenial social setting and the opportunity to make friendships and to develop supportive relationships outside family networks.

Bithi puts a great deal of emphasis on training a skilled work force. The idea that skilled workers who have been with them for several years should leave and make way for younger members (so as distribute the developmental benefits) makes no sense to them, since they need skilled, loyal producers who will be available to work and to whom they are loyal in return. Thus Bithi operates more as a compassionate, private sector company

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[29] In 2005 the exchange rate was 60 taka to one US dollar.
[30] See Table 7.1 for further examples of pay for both Fair Trade production and other types of paid work.

than as a developmental organization. Having skills and a secure income is seen as the driver of other development benefits. Their understanding of empowerment is to "empower women to help look after their families" (Meeting, Directors, Bithi, Dhaka, March 2005).

Another group of workers are those women employed by the handmade paper (HMP) companies, Papernow and Banglapaper, which supply Bithi. Here the women are treated as employees, since they are expected to come each day for set hours, though they do not receive a fixed salary and are paid a piece-rate based on the amount of paper and paper products that are produced. Papernow has a well-run and maintained plant (Research Diary, 5 March 2005), and at the time of research employed 44 regular producers, and 18 seasonal workers (Prokritee 2006: 17). Banglapaper employs 30 to more than 100 workers depending on orders (Research Diary, 11 March 2005). The company faces many problems (Section 9.7.2) such as a need for capital investment, permanent management, and a revitalised marketing and design strategy.

Each of the four SFTOs have been able to offer work spaces which are sensitive to the particular concerns of women in Bangladesh for personal security, the work is considered respectful (Gibson, Mahmud et al 2004), and where there are arrangements for them to maintain family responsibilities. These concerns put added responsibilities onto a socially responsible employer. Craftfair producers generally work from home and many women say this is what they prefer. Bithi, Papernow and Banglapaper, provide safe, secure, and attractive working conditions. The women at Bithi production centres can come and go to their homes, and bring their young children, which would not be allowed in other employment available to them such as a garment factory. From the point of view of the producers, these are important indicators of the 'fairness' of the organizations.

CRAFT	EMPLOYMENT STATUS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Jute	Member of a producer group Producers work from home	Social role of producer group New responsibilities Integrate handicraft work with household duties	Part time Piece rate payment Hours worked often unclear Additional work for women
Terracotta	Member of a producer group organised around traditional terracotta families Work from home	Full time wage for some male workers Integrate handicraft work with household duties	Part time for producers Piece rate payment Hours worked unclear Additional work for women
Embroidery	A producer with Bithi Work at a Production Centre	Full time when orders allow Good working conditions with social interaction Safe, secure work place	Some part time work Piece rate payment Additional work for women
HMP	More like an employee Work at a factory site	Full time, regular hours Safe, secure work place	Pay linked to orders Additional work for women

Table 6.1 Characteristics of the four production processes

A summary of the four different systems of production is given in Table 6.1. Most of the producers that I researched could be characterised as part-time, sometimes full-time, long term artisans working with one Fair Trade company. The main advantages are the opportunity to learn skills, have new experiences, increased social contact, and provision of secure work places. The main disadvantage is that many women have part-time work, or irregular work, when they would prefer full-time paid work. Many studies argue that part-time, home-based piecework is often exploitative (Grimes and Milligram 2000b, Scrase 2003, Pearson 2004). However, in my study, many of the home-based women wanted to work from home, and were better off than in other possible work opportunities, which appeared particularly badly paid and with few or no benefits (see Table 6.2). Given that home-based and part-time piece work present significant opportunity for exploitation, it is important that FTOs continually review payment rates and working conditions.

6.4.2 SFTOs as socially responsible employers

Many of the activities and policies of SFTOs can be seen as close to the functions of trade unions, in that the management of the SFTOs often argue for higher wages and better working conditions for their workers and provide benefits such as medical cover, savings schemes, and emergency funds. Such actions are based on the philosophy of Fair Trade and the priority given to the livelihoods of the producers (Littrell and Dickson 1999, Johnson and Sugden 2001, Davies 2003, Wempe 2005). An important difference is that such benefits are not in the control of the producers and workers, but in the hands of the directors and managers of SFTOs. These institutional practices and policies are also used to

influence other handicraft employers to provide better wages and conditions for their producers, providing a forum for discussion (ECOTA 2005), similar to the role of trades unions in other sectors.

Craftfair has a formal structure for the participation of producers, and representatives of producers are on the Board of Trustees. The HMP companies say that they have regular monthly meetings with their workers, where concerns are raised (Meetings, Managers, Muktagacha and Mymensingh, March 2005). In Bithi the situation is less formal. The producers discuss concerns with the supervisors, and are able to raise issues with Directors who visit them at the production centres. I several times observed women producers giving their views quite forcefully, requesting change, or suggesting ideas. This impression was backed up by survey data. When asked if there was someone they could go to if they had a concern, 98% of Fair Trade producers said yes and named that person. Only 38% of women in other paid work could name someone they would go to for help. Qualitative data also suggested that the producers felt that they were listened to and were treated with respect by the staff of SFTOs. At the Kalaiya production centre in Patuakhali, a cassette player was bought for the centre in response to a request from the producers (see Picture 6.1).

Picture 6.1 Receiving the cassette player, Patuakhali

> The women requested a cassette player, so they could listen to music .... it is a reward for their hard work, attendance and sincerity. (Meeting, Bithi Director, Patuakhali, February 2005)

Craftfair provides a range of financial benefits to the women through its producer group structure: a group development fund (GDF) to support the formation and maintenance of the producer groups, the Small Credit Fund (SCF) for income generation activities, Welfare Grants (a share of the company profit), and the Producers Security Fund (PSF) a savings scheme that is given as a pension when group members retire (Meetings, Craftfair Staff, Dhaka, January, February, March 2005). The PSF would be considered good business practice, the Welfare Grant is similar to the social premium paid to Fairtrade producers, and the SCF supports additional developmental initiatives. Many benefits to Bithi producers are provided through arrangements with TDH (Terre Des Hommes, a Swiss NGO) such as a savings and credit scheme. Bithi also helps financially when producers are ill, and provides assistance in individual cases of hardship (Meeting, Directors, Patuakhali, February 2005). The HMP companies provide financial benefits (see Table 6.3), but in the case of Banglapaper this is hampered by the poor financial state of the company.

Such additional benefits, including the involvement (even if limited) of producers in management, some means to have their concerns heard through regular meetings, respectful relationships, and additional financial services, are other aspects of 'fairness' to producers (Focus Groups, Mirpur, Kaliganj, Kallakair, January 2005). There was a reported widespread lack of benefits to women in other paid work (Table 6.2). While such benefits are more common in the UK, they are unusual in Bangladesh, and can be seen as practices of SFTOs which fulfil many aspects of the Fair Trade ethos, as well as contributing to responsible commercial organizations by building a loyal, skilled workforce.

Benefits provided by employer	Fair Trade producer		Commercial handicraft		Other paid work	
Training/skills	246	87%	22	29%	5	6%
Advance payments	16	6%	1	1%	0	
Group skills	148	52%	1	1%	2	3%
Product development information	127	45%	1	1%	0	
Micro credit	52	18%	0		0	
Education/health/ programmes	28	10%	0		2	3%
No services	4	1%	53	71%	65	82%
Total number in group	282		75		79	

Table 6.2 Comparison of benefits: SFTOs and other employment

6.4.3 The role of SFTOs in delivering developmental goals

FTOs seek to reduce poverty through the payment of a 'fair wage/price'. Poverty, however, is not just a function of income, but is maintained by institutions and configurations of power (de Haan 2005: 35). Section 6.3 discussed how Fair Trade networks in Bangladesh help to develop sustainable, commercial organizations that provide paid work *and* seek to achieve wider developmental goals. SFTOs have several positive characteristics for a developmental agent: they are not dependent on donor funding, on development fashions, or on short-term project cycles.

> I am quite critical of UNDP, DFID and large donor projects. But I am positive about the ability of Bangladeshis to make and develop markets if they get the right kind of help. There is a lot of creative energy in this country. The government is no help - they have no policies. (Discussion, Fair Trade Designer and Entrepreneur, Dhaka, December 2005)

SFTOs are necessarily focused on the long term in order to maintain commercial viability, and as indigenous institutions they can be culturally sensitive, and are well placed to maintain relationships with a range of other local organizations. It has been argued that in order to integrate and maintain change, SFTOs need to work with other agents, for example linking with NGOs (Kanji 2004), establishing alliances with environmental groups (Nash 2000: 178), and working with labour organizations (Grimes 2005: 245). My research found many examples of Craftfair and Bithi working with other organizations such as NGOs, advocacy groups, and Fair Trade forums (Section 6.3). An example of such cooperation is the partnership between Bithi and the NGO, TDH. In Tongi and Patuakhali, Bithi provides training, organizational support, and buys the products, while TDH maintains the production centres and pays the wages of the supervisors (Meeting, TDH manager, Patuakhali, February 2005). Through this arrangement a working environment is provided that is significantly better than other local alternatives. TDH are also involved in a medical programme (clinics, hospital, and education), primary schools, credit and savings schemes, and sanitation projects. Unfortunately, the activities of the NGO were not recognised much by the women in the survey (section 7.4.2), though they did recognise benefits coming from Bithi. However, such relationships can be problematic, and it is not necessarily the case that other agencies will share the same priorities as SFTOs (Section 9.5.3).

Craftfair's main approach to development is through its training and educational programmes covering a wide range of topics from group and committee skills, to identifying problems of production, to teaching about legal rights. In addition, the Education Section runs workshops in traditional development subjects such as nutrition, child care, sanitation, and environmental concerns. The staff and field workers delivering these programmes are "simultaneously social pioneers and development professionals" (Ahmad 2002: 188), as they negotiate a nuanced path between conservative cultural norms, religious sensitivities, and commercial realities.

> Where I am known (travelling around on my own) it is okay. Sometimes the men comment…Where I am not known, in remote areas, then it is not so easy …. these things can be a problem. Many men support my work, but they say they cannot support it openly. Others may complain… (Interview 1, Education Officer, Dhaka, November 2005)

At the HMP companies it is the responsibility of the management staff to provide additional benefits to the employees. At Papernow this includes home visits, talks on nutrition, health, rights, and literacy, financial benefits, and the opportunity to be consulted on work related matters (Meeting, Assistant Manager, Muktagacha, March 2005). At Banglapaper there are monthly meetings with the employees, an education programme, a credit scheme, and a small school for the children of employees (see Picture 6.2).

Picture 6.2 School for children of producers, Mymensingh

Table 6.3 summarizes the benefits and development activities of the different SFTOs. No attempt has been made to assess the quality of these services, as this chapter is focusing on institutional practices and how SFTOs see their role in development. Assessment of impact, which would include the benefits, or limitations, of these activities, are included in the following chapters.

Benefits, services and development activities	Craftfair jute	Craftfair terracotta	Bithi (TDH) embroidery	Papernow HMP	Banglapaper HMP
Savings and credit schemes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Medical expenses	✓		✓	✓	
Savings for pension	✓				
Involvement in management	✓	✓ new		✓	
Education programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development inputs	✓	✓ a little	✓	✓	
Producer group	✓	✓			
Monthly meetings	✓		✓	✓	✓
School on site for workers' children					✓
Emergency support during crisis	✓		✓		
Home visits, support to families	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 6.3 Summary of benefits and development initiatives of the four SFTOs

Such activities do put additional costs onto the price of Fair Trade goods. For example, at Papernow the price charged for a product is made up of the following costs, which includes a percentage for training and community development work.

> Wages, raw materials, and overheads = cost of production
> Add 2% of cost of production for skill development and training
> Add 2% of cost of production for community development
> Add 10% of cost of production for profit
> Plus transportation costs = price of product
> (Meeting, Manager, Muktagacha, February 2007)

The SFTOs face considerable limitations in their ability to deliver on development goals. Fulfilling the development and education objectives of Craftfair is the responsibility of two staff and four field workers. It is hard to see how such a small staff can effectively deal with over 4,000 producers in 17 districts. The responsibilities of this department include attending monthly meetings involving considerable travel around the country, arranging and giving informational talks and leading discussions, overseeing the savings and loans schemes, supervising the formation of new groups and the regular election of officers. Thus, a very small team does the core development work. The work is funded by the profits made by the organization, which also places constraints on the extent of the programme.

More could be done, especially for distant and new groups, with more resources (Meeting, Director, Dhaka, March 2005). Recommendations for improving the development goals of Craftfair (Buchler 2001: 48), have included help with skills training, promoting labour-saving tools, providing credit to improve capacity, and funding specific development activities, for example, a Danish buyer partly funds the Craftfair tree sapling programme. The NGO, TDH delivers the development input for Bithi at the production centres I visited. The HMP companies fund benefits through their profits. At Papernow the Product Development Manager is responsible for the welfare of workers, and regularly holds meetings and educational activities, administers the savings and credit scheme, and makes home visits (Meeting, Managers, Muktagacha, March 2005). Thus, the maintenance of development activities is directly linked to the profitability of the SFTOs, and to the cost of the products, since each organization adds a percentage to the final cost of goods in order to cover the cost of such activities. However, to most SFTOs, providing paid work remains the most important aspect of their developmental approach.

> The most important thing is to provide jobs – if people have that then they can take care of the other things, and have more time to listen and take in information. (Discussion, Manager, SFTO, Bogra, November 2005)

As this section demonstrates, the development activities are delivered by the SFTO, and specific development goals, the processes to achieve them and the speed at which to tackle problems vary considerably. The role of SFTOs in achieving development goals, and the variety in institutional responses, is largely ignored in representations of Fair Trade which stress primarily the NFTO and the individual producer. A limited understanding of Fair Trade can often neglect the vital role that SFTOs play (Ronchi 2002: 1) in developing producer organizations and in delivering developmental goals. The SFTO staff with whom I did research appear to have constructive, proactive relationships with their producers, but this is not necessarily the case, and there are often financial and institutional restrains on their capacity to engage in development activities.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has considered *how* Fair Trade happens by analysing the institutional practices between SFTOs and NFTOs, and between SFTOs and their producers. The commitment to

long term co-operative relationships between NFTOs and SFTOs, and loyalty to the social relationships which underpin the processes of partnerships (Section 6.3.1), have contributed to the social capital of the movement (Renard 2002). Such social capital, the ability to trust, to form alliances and to work cooperatively, contributes to building and sustaining the economic capital of SFTOs. The 'ideal' of partnership has delivered many advantages to SFTOs. Such partnerships, at their best, provide investment, improve quality of products, share knowledge, and demonstrate a socially responsible model of business. While each partner gains from the partnership, the NFTOs and Northern consumers have more power, not only in representations of Fair Trade (Chapter 5) but also in managing the partnership process. An example is the effective circulation of knowledge and skills from North to South, largely in the hands of staff of NFTOs. However, there is certainly a wish that certification processes become more influenced by Southern concerns and cultural norms (Scherer-Haynes 2007); thus an increasingly important aspect of Fair Trade partnerships is whether they can facilitate information and knowledge moving from SFTOs to NFTOs.

The various approaches to organising production have different advantages and disadvantages for producers (Table 6.1), though because of the socially responsible policies of the SFTOs (Section 6.4.2), the producers received many benefits, both financial and social, that are not typical of other paid work opportunities (Tables 6.2 and 6.3), but are significant aspects of pro-poor development strategies (Lindahl 2003, Palley 2005). SFTOs provide the development benefits, though their role is often hidden. Reducing poverty and achieving the empowerment of producers does include a fair return for labour and good working conditions, but also, and as importantly, other supportive activities that challenge the structural causes of poverty and discrimination. Improving the developmental impact of Fair Trade would include NFTOs being attentive to ways in which they can enable and support the developmental activities of SFTOs.

As this chapter demonstrates, there are many standpoints and multiple outcomes within Fair Trade partnerships, and again, institutional literature and research into Fair Trade needs to reflect this. An evaluation of impact depends on one's position, and an assessment of various organizational and individual objectives. SFTOs do have different development objectives, for example some take a proactive stance on empowerment, while others are most concerned about providing an income to poorer families. Individual producers might

have additional objectives, and different ones to that of the SFTOs, which are often more localised than issues of global trade justice. Thus it is important to be clear about whose objectives are being evaluated.

Although specific objectives may vary, depending on a range of factors, there remain many qualities that unite FTOs. An evaluation of the institutional practices of Fair Trade suggests there are limitations to a neo-liberal view of capitalism that privileges competition and is based on the choices of "rational, individual self interest" (Dawnay 2005), ignoring the importance of maintaining social relationships and the possibility of achieving shared social, economic and environmental goals through cooperative strategies. Such business practices would lend support to the theories of behavioural economics, which argue that concerns to "do the right thing", and to "want actions to be in line with values and commitments" (Dawnay 2005: 2) are important aspects of economic behaviour.

Chapter 7 Fair Trade and Poverty in Bangladesh

> Poverty is not only about a shortage of money. It is about rights and relationships; about how people are treated and how they regard themselves; about powerlessness, exclusion and loss of dignity. Yet the lack of adequate income is at its heart. (Mahatma Gandhi, cited in Grimes 2005: 246)

Two interlinked questions are addressed in this chapter. First, what are the effects of Fair Trade employment on poverty and on vulnerabilities felt by the household? Secondly, how does Fair Trade employment interact with other livelihood strategies of the poor? The analysis draws on my quantitative data, by comparing the experiences of the two groups, Fair Trade Producers (FTP) and Other Women (OW), with individual comment from the qualitative data. The analysis is in the context of the theoretical discussions of poverty (Sections 2.3 and 4.1) and of handicraft production in Bangladesh (Sections 3.5.1, 4.3, 5.6, 6.4.1). All FTOs share a commitment to reduce poverty, but the institutional arrangements to achieve this goal vary. Differences between Fair Trade producer groups are discussed in Chapter 9.

7.1 Poverty: approaches, definitions and measurement

Definitions of poverty and means of measuring it were introduced in Chapter 2, including a distinction between chronic and transitory poverty (McCulloch and Baulch 2000), where chronic poverty is a permanent condition, and transitory poverty reflects fluctuations in welfare (Section 2.3.2). Many additional people can experience transitory poverty where poor families fall into deeper poverty at particular times of the year because of reduced income or a shock to the household. Thus, an important question to ask is not only does Fair Trade employment reduce chronic poverty, but also does it help to "smooth out incomes" (McCulloch and Baulch 2000: 125) thus having an impact on transitory poverty. The World Bank and other international institutions often favour income measures of poverty and consider overall economic growth as the main factor in reducing poverty (World Bank 2005). The UNDP, along with most NGOs, uses a range of indicators, rejecting the primacy given to market-led economic growth and increases in income alone.

> Such a conceptualization prioritises market over other institutional mechanisms in meeting basic needs, and views the market as a neutral institution. It also ignores the differential ability of social groups... to convert income into wellbeing.... (Murthy and Sankaran 1999: 2)

While the World Bank's approach is often criticised by NGOs and academics, I found that household income was the most important characteristic of poverty raised by the women in my survey, with changes in income the most often cited cause of movements in or out of deeper poverty. McCulloch and Baulch argue that the only way to "reduce chronic poverty is sustained growth in household income" (McCulloch and Baulch 2000: 100). Therefore, it seems important to pay attention to income levels.

The 'Voices of the Poor' exercise in Bangladesh (un Nabi et al 1999) found that severity of poverty was linked to the degree of social exclusion. The bottom or "hated poor" were often landless, mostly female-headed households reduced to begging or menial work, who could not "participate fully in society" (Hossain 2005: 969). Many of the women in Fair Trade producer groups came from this category of the "hated poor", and faced patriarchal risk (Section 4.1.4). Achievements must be seen within the context of the initial, very low levels of economic and social wellbeing of many producers. Section 7.2 looks primarily at chronic poverty and adequacy of income, with the household as the unit of analysis (Section 2.3.4). Section 7.3 considers the relationship between Fair Trade production and other economic activities of the household. Section 7.4 analyses the impact of Fair Trade employment – income and other benefits – on transitory poverty. Section 7.5 covers issues raised by Murthy and Sankaran (1999) such as the ability to convert income into wellbeing.

In discussing my research findings, it is important to keep the following points in mind:

- The effects of Fair Trade are mediated through other significant characteristics and processes, such as the age of the producer, gender relationships, education, size of the family, the approach of the particular Fair Trade organization, attitudes of the Field Workers, and experience of natural disasters such as floods. All of these factors influence how producers view their situation. For example, if a woman has lost her husband recently, she will say her condition is worse, even if Fair Trade employment is having a positive impact, as the loss of her husband is such a significant event in her life. It is extremely difficult to isolate the effects of Fair Trade from other effects and influences, as often the producers do not do so.

- Answers given by individual women tend to be based on their personal situation rather than offering a hypothetical or general opinion. For example, if asked

whether daughters should be sent to school, the tendency is to answer yes or no only if the respondent had a daughter of school age, and otherwise to not respond.

- Bangladeshi women appear to be particularly isolated with few links outside the immediate family. They do not go to market, do not generally visit their own relatives, do not get involved in village affairs, and have little opportunity to discuss concerns with others outside the family. Thus, answers are almost wholly based on personal experience, and many of their attitudes towards life reflect 'taken for granted social norms' where they are doing what seems natural and inevitable.

- Often I make a comparison using the quantitative data between the Fair Trade producers (FTP) and the Other Women (OW). The strength of association is shown by the chi square data in the 'Note' to each table. Sometimes, the situation for the two groups of women is similar, and consequently, the degree of confidence (p value) is relatively low (Table 7.3 where p=0.04). In other situations I am suggesting that there is a significant difference between the two groups, and the degree of confidence is high (Table 7.5 where p= 0.0005)

While this Chapter and the next concentrate on change and the ways in which Fair Trade employment can be associated with the kinds of changes that the women producers desire, it is well to remember that sometimes the perception is that there has been very little change, and that their life is seen as 'always the same from day to day' (see Picture 7.1). This view was captured in the Survey (13 % of FTP and 26% of OW), and also in many of the Life Histories, and was especially true of 'Other Women' in villages, though some Fair Trade Producers who only had small part-time incomes also expressed this view.

Picture 7.1 "We are poor, we do not see any big changes." (LH 6, Madhupur, April 2005)

7.2 The impact on chronic poverty

7.2.1 A fair wage

The Traidcraft Fact Sheet titled 'What is a fair price?' (Traidcraft 2004) states that a fair price should broadly "ensure that the price not only covers the cost of production, but also makes a profit in order to have a reasonable life." Because there is no world price for handmade items, setting the price, which includes the amount paid to the producer, is the responsibility of the producer organization. Consumers of Fair Trade goods can have the mistaken view that a fair wage/price should be comparable to a wage in their own country, or that the majority of the sale price is returned to the producer. This is not the case, as producers are usually living in low wage economies where the cost of living is much lower than in high wage economies such as the UK. A fair price/wage must relate to the local economy; it would not be sustainable for it to be way above market rates. Thus, a fair price/wage was often described to me in Bangladesh as "a little above the market rate" or one which took account of the producer's time. All the producers were paid a piece rate, that is their monthly pay varied, and was based on a payment for each item made, taking

into account the cost of raw materials (if appropriate), their level of skill, and either a notional (work from home) or exact account (production centre) of the hours worked.

A fair price/wage can be seen as acting like a minimum wage in distorted or very imperfect markets, where workers do not have the information or the power to make choices and where employers due to "chronic poverty, mass unemployment, excess supply of unskilled labour, and/or lack of workers' bargaining power allow employers to set wages at exploitative levels" (Devereux 2005: 911). Such a situation was evident in Bangladesh:

> Villagers are isolated, and often don't know what is happening in another village, so it is still possible for someone to come in and pay very low prices or wages, or to promise one price and give another. (Discussion, Director, SFTO, Bogra, November 2005)

The classic argument against minimum wages is that they will increase unemployment. Fields and Kanbur found that the effect of a minimum wage was varied, sometimes increasing, sometimes decreasing poverty (Fields and Kanbur 2005). Research by Devereux suggests "the potential of minimum wages as a poverty reduction instrument has been underestimated" (Devereux 2005: 899), particularly in developing countries where markets do not work as well as in industrialised countries. He cites evidence from studies in Thailand, the Philippines, Latin America and Africa where forcing employers to pay a minimum wage does not lead to laying off workers as often the employer was "extracting excess profit margins by under-remunerating labour" (Devereux 2005: 902). Thus, Fair Trade can, at times, have a similar effect in reducing poverty without increasing unemployment by paying higher wages voluntarily. Paying a fair wage also contributes to poverty reduction by helping poor people to avoid reducing their attributes in health and education, or forcing them to sell assets in order to pay for costs associated with production that have not been covered in an exploitative wage. It can also have a beneficial effect in raising levels of pay for other low paid workers, where landowners or employers are also 'extracting excessive profits' from their labour.

7.2.2 Opportunities for paid work

I decided to base my research not just on Fair Trade Producers (FTP), but also on a similar number of 'Other' Women (OW), in order to establish, first, what were the paid work

opportunities for women and how these compared to Fair Trade handicraft production, and secondly, to see if the traditional and often preferred cultural norm of women being supported by male relatives was still possible. There was not, however, a clear division between women who worked in Fair Trade production and women who did not (Table 7.1). Some of the Fair Trade Producers had other paid work, and many of the handicraft producers working for commercial buyers also had another source of income. In several areas a few Fair Trade Producers would sub-contract their handicraft work to relatives or other women in the villages.

Categories within the Survey	Numbers	percentage
Fair Trade Producers	248	44%
Fair Trade produces with another income	34	6%
Handicraft producers with commercial buyers	63	11%
Handicraft producers with another income	12	2%
Women with other paid work	33	6%
Women with no source of earned income	176	31%
Total number in Survey	566	100%

Table 7.1 Categories of women related to paid work in the survey

'Fair Trade Producers' (FTP) refers to the women who are members of Fair Trade production groups or work at Fair Trade production centres (n = 282). All other women are referred to as 'Other Women' (OW) (n = 284), some of whom have paid work (n = 108) and some of whom do not have any paid work (n = 176). [31]

To the first question, what are the work opportunities for women and how do they compare to Fair Trade, it would seem from my data that prospects for paid work are extremely limited for women in Bangladesh. Other research has found that women are excluded from a whole range of sectors in the work force, and are concentrated in a few occupations (Salway, Jesmin et al 2005). The most common types of paid work were involvement in handicraft production (both through Fair Trade partnerships and commercial buyers), working as housemaids and employment as day labourers (usually in the fields or on road works). Women in Dhaka and Mymensingh had a greater range of jobs, such as cleaning,

[31] See Table 3.3 for the regional breakdown of people interviewed. It was the intention to interview 36 FTP and 36 OW in each area. However, in Kallakair 32 FTP and 32 OW were interviewed, as there were only 32 women in the Fair Trade producer group. In Shariatpur we interviewed 36 OW, but only 34 FTP, as two women were away at the time.

cooking, factory work, and tailoring. Of women who had no paid work, 64% expressed a desire to have paid work. Sewing and craftwork in the commercial sector appeared to be particularly badly paid.

> I dye cloth... and also make block prints. I have been doing this for three years. It is all day [9 hours] 6 days a week. I receive 300 taka a month. I do not enjoy this work. (Survey 259, Other Woman (OW), Madhupur, February 2005)

To the second question, could women still expect to be supported by male relatives, my data suggest that only a very few women can rely on male family members for a secure livelihood, at least in these areas and amongst the poor. Only 30 women (5%) out of 566 did not want to have paid work, and a further 32 (5.6%) were undecided, which could mean that they wanted to, or felt they needed an income, but family members would not allow them to work. As landlessness increases and households have to rely on waged labour, more and more families are moving away from the traditional norm and having to find new livelihood strategies.

Table 7.2 summarises the types of work and the numbers involved from my survey, as well as other paid work associated with a particular region. The location of each type of Fair Trade production is included. An estimate of the range of pay rates is given. The minimum wage in Bangladesh is 50 taka per day[32]. Fair Trade organizations try to pay 60 taka a day[33] (Bithi and Craftfair meetings, March 2005). It is estimated that a family of 4 to 5 in a village needs 3,000-3,500 taka a month to survive at a reasonable level (statement from various ATO and NGO staff).

[32] At the time of the research the exchange rate was 60 taka to $1.00.
[33] This rate has been increased to 70 taka per day by some SFTOs in Bangladesh in 2007.

Type of work	Number	Payment	Region
Fair Trade handicraft production	282	Jute, part-time, 300-1,000 taka/month Jute, full-time, 2,000-3,000 taka/month Terracotta, part-time, 1,000-2,000 taka/month Terracotta, full-time, 4000 taka/month Embroidery, part-time, 50-60 taka/day Embroidery, full-time, 1500-3000 taka/month tailors, full-time, 4,000 taka/month Handmade paper, full-time, 1500-2,500 taka/month (a few at 600-800)[34]	Kaliganj, Madhupur Kallakair Shariatpur Patuakhali Badda/Tongi Dhaka Muktagacha Mymensingh
Handicraft production	70 5	Full and part time, 200-400 taka/month Full-time 1,000-2,000 taka/month	All areas Dhaka
Housemaids	20	Full-time, 200 taka/month, often paid in rice	All areas
Land labour	18	Supposed to be 50 taka/day	Madhupur
Selling at markets	14		
Tailoring	13	Full and part-time, up to 2,000 taka/month	Badda/Tongi
Cooks/cleaners	4		Mymensingh
Private tuition	4		
Mill, factory work	3	Full -time, 500-800 taka , rising to 1500-2500 for skilled full-time work	Kaliganj, Badda
NGO worker	2	Full-time, 1,000-2,000 taka/month	
Garment factory[35]		Start at 1,000, well trained 2000-2500	Badda

Table 7.2 Examples of paid work with approximate payment, estimates for 2005

Wages are very low in Bangladesh. The general full-time wage rate for Bangladeshi workers was 2500 taka, and 2400-3600 taka in the industrial sector in 2003-2004 (ECOTA 2005: 21). Fishery, construction and agricultural workers are paid less, where handicraft artisans are considered part of the agro-sector. The average monthly income for women was estimated at 686 taka (Salway, Jesmin et al 2005), and women day labourers are often paid 30 taka/day, where men usually receive 50 taka/day. It was very difficult to make an assessment of wages for the work undertaken by women in my survey. Answers varied significantly and often women seemed unsure or unwilling to say what they were paid. The hours worked also varied greatly and this affected the level of pay. However, from the survey and also from life histories and interviews, a number of conclusions can be drawn:

- Fair Trade handicraft production offers similar and often better pay than other available work. At full-time rates it is comparable to full-time pay for higher skilled jobs in factories.

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[34] By the time of the third field visit (February 2007), these wages had been raised to 1,500-2,000 (Section 9.7.1)

[35] Several women had previously worked in garment factories, and now worked for a SFTO, or had left paid work after marriage.

- Other paid work for women is often paid in kind, for example payment in rice for agricultural and domestic work
- Commercial handicraft production seems particularly exploitative. The women are paid much less than those women associated with Fair Trade organizations, and receive very few, if any, services or benefits (see Table 6.2), and have no bargaining power since they are approached individually. An unusual group are the women (five) who sew and embroider for commercial buyers in Badda/Tongi and who make a reasonable income (1,000-2,000 taka/month). Often they do not know who the buyer is as the materials are brought to their homes by a middle man/woman.

Even the two women in the sample with what would be considered a good job, working for an NGO, are not paid well and can be exploited in other ways. "NGO field workers are often overworked, undervalued and given poor pay and training" (Ahmad 2002: 188). One of my respondents had previously worked for an NGO, but now spends all her time with the Fair Trade production group.

> I passed my SSC exam[36], and I worked in an NGO.... It was hard work. We use to make field visits and it made us tired. Nowadays I am completely involved in the Fair Trade group... I am taking care of many things. I distribute the work among the members. Members submit their work to me when finished. Then I send the products to Dhaka. With another member, we prepare the bill and maintain the cash book. (LH 9, Madhupur, April 2005).

The quotation also demonstrates the range of additional skills (literacy, bookkeeping, quality control) that can be responsibilities of Fair Trade group members (Section 8.2.5). Fair Trade women did not see the other possible work situations as better.

> The only other work is being a maid or working in a garment factory. We like and want to work from home. (Focus Group, Monipur, January 2005)

Sometimes, women could combine Fair Trade production with other house-based activities to earn additional money.

> I do my jute work. I bought some calves with some loan money. I sell the calves and also milk in the market. (Survey 106, Kaliganj, January 2005)

[36] SSC refers to the Standard School Certificate after completing 10 years of schooling.

An important group to keep in mind is those women who do not have men to support them through divorce, desertion, or widowhood. Because of increasing poverty and lack of land, the number of men taking second wives as a means to gain some income or assets from dowry, seems to be growing (Kabeer 2000). This is one form of patriarchal risk (Section 4.1.4) since it often leaves the first wife and her children destitute, as the husband would divorce or refuse to support her. Although it is illegal to take a second wife without the consent of the first wife, few women have the connections or the power to stop a husband divorcing her or taking an additional wife. Such abandoned and divorced women were often brought into Fair Trade groups, or helped through subcontracting, providing further evidence of Fair Trade reaching some of the poorest and most vulnerable households. The following quotations illustrate the impact that having an income, and being a Fair Trade producer has had on such abandoned women.

> I have a handicapped son. My husband took a second wife. I now live with my mother. My handicraft income is all I have. (Survey 507, Tongi, February 2005)

> I was divorced. It was very difficult for me. I started working here and had some income. I was then married again. Now we are happy and I have enough food, I can even buy some land. My status improved and I was able to make things better for myself. (Survey 713, Muktagacha, March 2005)

> I am separated from my husband. Without an income I am a burden to my family.... both my father and brother are not working... I want to establish myself. (Survey 812, Mymensingh, March 2005)

7.2.3 Disadvantages of Fair Trade employment

The main disadvantages associated with Fair Trade employment, were irregular income and some physical problems associated with production. Irregular work was identified by 73% of producers as the main problem, where there could be weeks without work, and not having a regular source of cash is a significant disadvantage. At other times, they have to work long hours to get an order ready. This makes additional demands on their time, as they still have their household chores to do. At Patuakhali, it was arranged that the women could sleep at the centre so the work could be done quickly (Manager, March 2005) in order to finish a large order on time. While they would like regular hours and long hours can be a problem at times, the most persistent complaint was a lack of orders.

> We would like a consistent income that lasts through the year. (Focus Group, Kaliganj, January 2005)

The majority of women in Fair Trade groups said they were satisfied with the price paid to them and recognised that it was more than they could earn in any other work, with the added advantage of being able to work from home or at a Production Centre that was close to their home. However, a significant proportion of producers (37%) see the income as too low, and a few producers did complain about what they saw as low pay.

> The money we receive is not sufficient to cover the livelihood requirements. The work is hard and the payment we receive is not handsome. (LH1, Tongi, April 2005)

This assessment is based on the hours they have to work and their need for cash. Generally, they have little idea what a business can afford, or what other costs are incurred in getting a product to the buyer. And, if there are no orders, there is no work for them. This is what is so difficult for the producers, and is often behind the statement that the income is insufficient – they have periods when they have no income. It is a problem that is recognised and is partially addressed by concerted efforts in product development in order to increase volumes of sales. Some of the FTOs in Bangladesh, for example Dhaka Handicrafts, give their producers a monthly wage (Interview CEO, Dhaka, December 2005). Both Craftfair and Bithi said they would like to give their producers a regular income (Meetings, Directors, Dhaka, March 2005), but could not until they had more regular orders.

The only other significant disadvantage of Fair Trade employment are physical problems connected to production, where 36% of producers said they experienced health problems as a result of making handicrafts. At the interview stage a written record was kept of the most common complaints. Eye and hand complaints were associated with jute, eyestrain with the embroidery, and skin rashes with paper production.

> Problems with my eyes happen when I work with the jute. The fibre enters my eyes. It often happens with many workers. This is a common problem. (LH7, Madhupur, April 2005)

The health issues were raised with managers at Craftfair and with Bithi. Various solutions were suggested (eye tests, better light, plastic goggles, rubber gloves), and additional discussions were to be had with supervisors and women in the producer groups.

> It is better for the women, and it is better for us as a business if they can see, that they are comfortable in their work. We need to have quality products, at the same time we need to keep skilled workers.
> (Discussion, Managers, Bithi, Dhaka, December 2005)

7.2.4 Use of women's paid income

Women who have paid work use their income for necessities such as food, clothes, and school expenses. The only difference in the use of income is that Fair Trade women are more likely to be able to buy land and/or animals (Table 7.3). It is notable that 20% of each group is using some of their income for weddings and dowry (Section 7.4.1).

Use of income	FTP number	FTP percentage	OW number	OW percentage
Food	239	85%	96	89%
School expenses	186	66%	69	61%
Land and/or animals	98	35%	29	27%
Business	14	5%	6	6%
Marriage and dowry	56	20%	23	21%
Total number	282		108	

Note: χ^2=13.191 df = 6 p = 0.040
Note: many women gave multiple responses.

Table 7.3 Use of income for Fair Trade Producers and Other Women in paid work

However, there is a significant difference in the two groups of women in paid work when asked if their income is sufficient to meet basic necessities. Here, the Fair Trade Producers (FTP) are more likely to be able to meet their expenses, though it could not be said that a Fair Trade income necessarily covers basic needs, as there are still some FTP who can not buy enough food (12%), clothing (66%), school supplies (66%) , or household items (67%).

Basic expenditure	FTP number	FTP percentage	OW number	OW percentage
Food	247	88%	244	86%
Clothing	95	34%	60	21%
School supplies	95	34%	48	15%
Household items	92	33%	65	23%
Total	282		284	

Note: χ^2= 26.858 df = 8 p= 0.001

Table 7.4 The ability to meet basic expenditures

Many women said that having one or two meals a day had been quite common in the past, but now they had enough food to feed their families three meals a day, though 17% of OW still had only two meals a day. The only area where some FTP had only two meals a day was in Mymensingh, where there had been no orders, and therefore pay, for several months. When considering the range and amount of food eaten by the family on the previous day, the groups are fairly similar, although in each case, more of the FTP than the OW were able to serve a range of food to their families, including rice, dhal, vegetables and meat or fish. There was a lack of eggs and milk across both groups. However, when asked whether the amount of food was better or worse over the last five years, there was a significant difference between the two groups, where FTP were doing better, and the OW finding their situation worse (see Table 7.5). While 70% of FTP perceived their situations as getting better, only 36% of OW felt their situation was better.

Change in food supply	FTP number	FTP percentage	OW number	OW percentage
Better	197	70%	103	36%
The same	55	20%	110	39%
Worse	30	10%	71	25%
Total	282	100%	284	100%

Note: χ^2=67.758 df=5 p<0.0005

Table 7.5 Change in the amount of food over the last five years

When asked the reasons for the food supply becoming better or worse, overwhelmingly income was given as the main reason. Less income was the reason given by 49% of OW, while 66% of FTP said their handicraft income was the main reason for improvement. Other reasons, such as illness, severe weather, more or less land or assets were given in only 2%-3 % of answers, suggesting that chronic low income is the main problem within households.

7.2.5 Adequacy of a Fair Trade Income

The adequacy of a handicraft income was an issue that has come up in previous FT research (Table 2.8). In order to assess the contribution that Fair Trade income makes to the household (Section 2.3.4), a number of related questions were asked. First, increased access to land was considered, as one of the main aspirations identified by the women was the ability to buy land. Although the actual numbers are small, families of Fair Trade Producers

were twice as likely to have bought or leased land over the previous five years as the Other Women (38 compared to 20). In addition, many of the FTP use the savings schemes provided by the SFTO (Section 6.4.2) to acquire assets such as sewing machines, or animals (Table 9.4) which would contribute to additional economic activity of the household (Section 7.3.2).

Another means to assess the adequacy of the income was to consider the frequency and use of loans to the household. Research on the impact of micro-finance has argued that loans used for buying productive assets can reduce poverty (Section 4.4), though some studies have shown that poor people, even those with paid work, regularly take out loans for meeting daily needs (Begum and Sen 2005: 20). Table 7.7 shows that both the number (roughly 2/3 of each group) and the sources for the loans are very similar for both groups of women. The use of loans is also broadly similar across the two groups, with most loans spent on recurrent expenditure, such as food, clothing and household expenses. This suggests that all the women, including those who are involved in Fair Trade production, need additional income, particularly in times of stress, for example during serious illness. In areas subject to flooding they would need to find cash to repair their houses. This is included in the category 'household necessities'. It is disappointing that so few of the loans are used for productive purposes, micro-enterprises or the buying of assets, such as animals. Loans appear to help poor families deal with crisis and risks, an important aspect of households falling into deeper poverty (Section 4.1.2).

Source of loan	**FTP number**	**FTP percentage**	**OW numbers**	**OW percentage**
Owe to a moneylender	22	8%	16	6%
Owe to a microfinance group/NGO	90	32%	91	32%
Owe to a relative	79	29%	88	32%
No loan	86	31%	82	30%
Total number of respondents	277	100%	277	100%
Use of loans				
Household necessities	99	51%	94	47%
Food	31	16%	45	23%
Illness	36	19%	50	26%
Assets	35	18%	44	23%
Micro enterprise	21	11%	19	10%
Other	6	2%	3	1%
No response on use of loan	49	26%	22	11%
Total number of women with loans	191	143%	195	141%

Note: Many women gave multiple answers for use of loans

Table 7.6 Source and use of loans

7.2.6 Conclusion: the impact on chronic poverty

Both the main advantage (a higher wage) and the main disadvantage (irregular orders) to Fair Trade employment were connected to the level of cash income. Many FTP who have part-time work would like to have full-time work. The only other disadvantage given in the survey was health issues related to production, which were brought to the attention of the SFTOs. Working for an SFTO is seen as a good option and the pay is more than they could earn from other available jobs (Table 7.2), particularly the very low pay earned by other handicraft producers. FTP are better able to meet basic expenditures and most asses their situation as getting better. Women facing patriarchal risk (Section 4.1.4), those who are abandoned or widowed, would face destitution without their Fair Trade income. However, there are three important caveats to this generally positive picture:

- The income is not large enough to move out of poverty when facing recurrent crises such as serious illness or natural disasters.
- The income can be irregular for some producers, creating periods when they earn no income, and are also unavailable for other work.
- Bangladesh is a low wage economy, where 50% of the population lives on less than $1 a day, with 83% living on less than $2 a day[37]. The piece rate paid by SFTOs compares favourably to other available paid work (see Table 7.2), but it is still low pay.

Reducing chronic poverty can only be achieved by "large and sustained growth in household incomes" (McCulloch and Baulch 2000: 100). The main economic contribution of Fair Trade employment, and a very important one, is to support poor households so they do not go deeper into poverty, or become destitute. Overall, it can be argued that Fair Trade employment has a positive effect on, but does not eliminate chronic poverty since it increases the absolute income to the household, and because it is paid to the women, it is likely that it will be spent on the family's needs (Table 7.4). However, the income is too low to move the household out of poverty.

[37] http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_BGD.html Accessed 11 June 2007

7.3 Fair Trade handicraft producers and other household strategies

This Section will consider the relationship between Fair Trade employment and other livelihood strategies of the household. A livelihoods perspective has been adopted (Section 2.3.5), viewing poverty within the context of social relationships, institutions, and cultural norms, and considering the linkages between different levels of activity (Bird and Snedker 2002, de Haan and Zoomers 2005). The household will have endowments of capital (land, assets, skills, social networks)[38] and labour that are applied to a range of activities to create income (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000). Does employment with SFTOs have additional benefits in terms of improving livelihood options, or does it constrain such choices and opportunities?

7.3.1Increasing women's work

As discussed in Section 4.1.4, women are expected to do the household work and childcare and, in addition, are often involved in other unpaid work that contributes to the welfare of the family. Previous studies on Fair Trade have drawn attention to the increasing work loads of women (Hopkins 2000a) and of the gendered nature of the division of labour (Utting-Chamorro 2005). In Bangladesh 43% of rural women are involved in agricultural activities, and 70% work as unpaid family labour (Hashmi 2000: 6). Many of the women spoke of their long hours of work.

> I get up from sleep at five o'clock in the morning. Then I conduct my prayers. I prepare the breakfast. I feed the cattle. I do not have time to take rest. I am working all day.... my husband does some share cropping. (LH 13, Kaliganj November 2005)

> I am getting up at four o'clock. Then I cook for my boys because they leave for their work place early in the morning. I also run a small poultry business. Often I prepare the sika [jute hanging basket] if we have an order – I take care of everything.... I also work as a midwife. If I get a call I go and attend the delivery. 165 babies were born in my hands. (LH.15, Kallakair, November 2005)

Women have to fit in the handicraft work alongside their household duties, or if they work at a production centre, use the evenings and early morning for such chores. On the one hand, a welcomed characteristic of handicraft work is that women can do it at home, and

[38] Capital is divided into physical, human, financial and social capital, and is drawn on in the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to poverty (SLA)

this is what many women say they want. This desire on their part reflects their current position and their responsibilities within the family, but completing all these responsibilities and doing handicraft work can mean very long hours and extra demands placed on them. I cannot say for how many women this would be true, as the women were more concerned to stress their need for consistent work. My sense, from hearing the stories of many women, observing their households, and discussing this with my Research Assistants, is that many women have too much to do, and extra work is transferred onto daughters and other female relatives, which has implications for their wellbeing and education. But some of the women, those from the poorest households, those without land, often did not have enough to do and were pleased to have an additional activity to fill their day.

The savings and loans schemes operated by SFTOs can also provide the income necessary to buy or lease land and animals (see Table 7.3 and 7.4). Gaining access to land will provide more food for the family, the possibility of income through the sale of crops, and increased security. However, it also increases the workload of women.

> I have been working for Craftfair for 30 years...With my income we leased some cultivable land and constructed our house.... we are cultivating vegetables, the yield was not satisfactory as it was affected by rain.... we are unable to do other types of work as my husband has heart disease.... As we are followers of the Hindu religion, we have to follow some rules when we wake up. Then we take our breakfast. After that I cook our day meal and leave the house for the field. We spend all day in the field and when we get back home I still have some household work to do – washing the dishes, feeding the cattle. Then we go back to the field. (LH 10, Kaliganj, November 2005)

It is the tradition for Muslim women not to work in the fields, but they are often involved in home-based agricultural activity (Section 4.1.4). Thus the situation is mixed and depends on the age of the woman, the number of people in her home, the amount of land the household owns, the religion of the household, and the attitude of her husband. Handicraft work may or may not be good for the women, but they would likely suppress saying this in a desire for paid work. In this situation FTOs have to remain aware of the increasing work burdens on women. The production of handicrafts can be very exploitative and women are in a weak position: the family need for cash will almost always take precedence over a woman's own health and wellbeing.

7.3.2 Livelihood choices of the household

The household is the site of production and consumption (Section 2.3.4) where the household's labour endowment (Sen 1999) refers to the ability to raise income and increase or maintain assets through the use of its labour. Poverty "reflects a conjunction of low endowments, low returns to those endowments and vulnerability to shocks" (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000: 19). Handicraft work would be one example of turning the endowments of labour and skills into income. Another use of labour endowments was establishing micro-enterprises, particularly in the Kallakair area. Some of the Fair Trade women also engaged in subcontracting, where they would use their entitlement to work (by being a member of a Fair Trade producer group) to provide paid work to a relative or friend, while taking a cut for themselves. This appeared to happen primarily when the FTP was more economically secure than previously, and as a means to help poorer relatives, and both the women who gave the work, and the women who received it spoke openly about the arrangement, though such practices created difficulties and were not approved of by the SFTOs (Section 8.2.6).

It was quite typical for a more fortunate household to have a variety of sources of income. Both sons and daughters could have paid work. One of the producers at the HMP plant in Muktagacha described the various livelihood strategies of her family.

> I am still unmarried. My father sometimes drives a rickshaw van. My mother does all the household work, she also raises poultry and fries rice crisps [for sale]. My father cultivates land as a sharecropper. He produces rice, but it only lasts us for three to four months. He also works as a day labourer in other people's fields, and in repairing thatched houses. (LH 21, Muktagacha, February 2007)

Those who are lucky enough to have land grow agricultural crops, mainly for their own use, but also to sell locally if they produce a surplus. Although agriculture remains the major source of rural employment, with women primarily involved in vegetable production, livestock rearing, and in some fieldwork (Garrett and Chowdhury 2004: 4), the scarcity of land, and the concentration of land in the hands of fewer families, means that increasing numbers of people have to rely on non-agricultural work. A recent report suggests that non-farm activity, such as market trading, rickshaw driving, and office based work, now accounts for over 40% of rural employment in Bangladesh (DFID 2004: iii). The most

typical occupations of husbands and sons (Table 7.7) are farming, land labouring, rickshaw pulling, and, in cities, menial tasks such as cleaning and working as guards or watchmen. Some sons or husbands have to migrate and send remittances to the family. A significant number of women had no husband, or a father or husband who did not earn an income (40% for FTP and 25% for OW).

Occupation of husband/father	FTP number	OW number	FTP sons	OW sons	FTP daughters	OW daughters
Paid work/field labour	82	140	47	61	8	17
Farmer on own land	51	37	4	6		
Market trader	25	33	5	6		
Handicraft/artisan	6	4	3		3	2
Unemployed	17	16				
Unable to work	1	2				
Leisure	3	7				
No husband, abandoned or divorced	97	45				
Total, no husband or not working	114 (40%)	70 (25%)				
Total number of women	282	284				

Note: There were 59 young, unmarried girls in the Survey (48 FTP and 22 OW). In these cases the paid work of their father, brothers and sisters were recorded.

Table 7.7 Main occupation of husband/father with paid work of sons and daughters

There are also a range of other economic activities (Table 7.8), done by members of the family, the most common being harvesting of crops (usually for richer households) and market based activity.

Other income to household	FTP family	OW family
Husking rice	11	5
Harvesting of crops	56	45
Food preparation, market activity	51	19
Micro-enterprise	2	4
Other	2	0
Total	122 (43%)	73 (26%)
Total number of women in Survey	282	284

Table 7.8 Other household sources of income

There are few economic choices and often people struggle to find additional sources of income. However, 43% of the families of FTP, compared to 26% of families of OW are engaged in other economic activities. One might speculate on the reasons for this: that the FT families are poorer and have a greater need for income, or those families that allow women to work are more enterprising generally, or that they are healthier and more educated and thus can take advantage of additional opportunities. In general though, it would seem that handicraft production is not a disincentive to other livelihood strategies, but, alternatively, correlates with additional economic strategies of the household.

7.3.3 Facilitation of rural-urban linkages

There have always been connections between villages and cities, as towns provide commodities and services and rural areas often provide the increasing labour needed by cities. Families have relatives who work in distant places and return with goods and new ideas. Although Bangladesh is overwhelmingly a rural country, with approximately 70% living in rural areas, the two cities, Dhaka and Chittagong, have grown rapidly through the 'push and pull' factors (Garrett and Chowdhury 2004) of well educated and skilled people seeking good jobs and the landless and destitute coming in search of work. As the previous sections have demonstrated, the poor household uses a variety of livelihood strategies: agriculture, non-agricultural activity, market trading, migration, handicrafts for women, and recently women in full-time factory work. Traditionally, Bangladeshi villages were largely self-sufficient, but this is changing, "as rural areas are increasingly integrated with urban areas through physical infrastructure, communications, markets and institutions" (DFID 2004: iii). Where once there were fields there are now ribbon developments of shops, markets and stalls along newly built roads connecting many villages directly to the modern sectors of the economy.

A question that follows from this is whether Fair Trade facilitates the ability to participate in the transformation to non-farm based activities, and the growth of resources and skills that are needed to take advantage of regional and urban developments (Garrett and Chowdhury 2004: 47). In the areas I studied, it appears that SFTOs are able to provide training and improved skills, create new jobs, and through cooperation with NFTOs, introduce investment and secure new export markets. Given the imperfections of rural markets in Bangladesh (Garrett and Chowdhury 2004), the introduction of better products and standards by SFTOs has contributed to making rural markets function better. Products that are not good enough for export, yet better than those produced locally, are sold to local markets (Survey 225, Madhupur, January 2005). The poorest have the most difficulty in accessing higher-value markets (Sen and Hulme 2005), and Fair Trade, through the injection of income, skills, and new knowledge into poor households, helps to facilitate their access to better paid jobs. An important area to study is whether, over the generations, the life chances and experiences of the sons and daughters of Fair Trade Producers are improving in the ways in which, and to the extent that, current data and impressions suggest.

Fair Trade partnerships do encourage communication between rural people and urban institutions. Rural people are brought into export trade, and through visits to SFTOs in Dhaka learn about urban services and new types of organizations not found in villages. Many producers live in very remote areas of the country (see Picture 7.2). The terracotta export market is an example of developing rural-urban linkages: potters living in remote rural villages producing traditional products for a saturated local market, have now developed into a group that produces high quality goods for export. The designer, who lives in the village, has connections with an artist at the University in Dhaka. The son of the family is in Calcutta studying, with the intention of returning to the business (Research Diary, Shariatpur, 15 February 2005).

Picture 7.2 On the 15 hour boat trip, bringing embroidered products to Dhaka

7.3.4 Conclusion: livelihood choices

This section has shown that handicraft production is done along side household chores and often in conjunction with other paid or unpaid work undertaken by women to improve the economic wellbeing of the household. Generally, though not always, handicraft production adds to the already substantial workloads of women. FTP households undertake a range of livelihood strategies, and both quantitative and qualitative data suggest that such households are enterprising, and the combination of income, skills, and access to savings,

gives them the opportunity to develop small family businesses, particularly in Kallakair and Kaliganj. Thus it would seem that Fair Trade production can facilitate other livelihood strategies. SFTOs have been able to provide training and investment into poorer households, and facilitate linkages between rural and urban activities by developing export markets, and by encouraging producers to bring their products themselves to Dhaka. For some of the producers (the men in the terracotta groups, and the women in the jute-based producer groups) experiences in town add to their social capital.

7.4 Transitory poverty: the ability to smooth incomes

It is estimated that many families experience transitory poverty, where they oscillate above and below the poverty line, and strategies to "smooth incomes" can significantly reduce such poverty (McCulloch and Baulch 2000). Thus, a further question is whether Fair Trade employment has additional advantages, besides level of income, which would affect the movement of households into greater poverty (through risk factors) or out of poverty (improvement in new opportunities).

7.4.1 Vulnerabilities of the poor

Poor families often do not have sufficient income to cover emergencies, such as chronic illness, or exceptional expenses such as weddings. To meet these demands and emergencies, they borrow money and if they cannot repay the loans they fall deeper in debt, at worst losing some of their remaining assets. The most common risks faced by households were identified in Section 4.1.2, and include illness or death, losing land and animals, and natural disasters (un Nabi, Datta et al. 2002). One of the main crises to face poor people in Bangladesh is recurrent flooding, where they can lose animals, their house, and their source of livelihood as a result of the disaster. Fair Trade Producers (FTP) as a group appear to be slightly better able to recover from such disasters (see Table 7.9). The majority of producers in Fair Trade are from the poorest and most vulnerable households, including women headed households (35% for FTP and 16 % for OW), so it suggests that Fair Trade employment does have an impact on helping poor households to cope with crisis, though not in all cases.

Response to natural disaster in last year	FTP number	FTP percentage	OW number	OW percentage
Were able to recover	127	54%	107	45%
Not able to recover	52	22%	76	32%
Little impact	57	24%	56	23%
Total facing disaster last year	236	100%	239	100%

Note: χ^2=7.911 df = 3 p =0.048

Table 7.9 Ability to recover from a natural disaster

Another area of crisis is serious illness (see Table 7.10). Many poor people have occupations which lead to poor health, for example rickshaw pullers, and have inadequate income to deal with the problems (Begum and Sen 2005). Given the additional income, it could be expected that Fair Trade women would have healthier families. Generally, FTP have less illness in their families than the families of the OW (34 % compared to 22%). However, the incidence of illness seems quite high across both groups. The responses to illness are also quite similar, although families of FTP showed higher use of doctors (62% compared to 54%) and less use of hospitals (29% compared to 35%), perhaps reflecting the lower incidence of major illness in the family.

Extent of illness	FTP numbers	FTP percentage	OW numbers	OW percentage
Illness in family in last year	116	41%	139	49%
Serious illness in last year	69	25%	83	29%
No major illness	97	34%	62	22%
Total	282	100%	284	100%

Note: χ^2=14.201 df = 3 p = 0.003

Table 7.10 Extent of illness in families

Expenses associated with weddings and the payment of dowry for the parents of daughters place substantial financial burdens on families, and can be a reason for falling deeper into poverty. Many women, especially FTP, said they did not approve of dowry (Focus Group, Mirpur, January 2005) and the practice is illegal in Bangladesh, but studies suggest that demands for dowry continue, and are increasing[39]. For most, however, it would seem that paying dowry is an established norm that is difficult to avoid.

[39] CARE Bangladesh conducted research in 2002 and 2005, and found that dowry payments were increasing in size and in frequency. Only 50 % of respondents had dowry paid for their marriage, but 90% of their daughters had to pay dowry, "a dramatic change in a generation". (www.carebd.org/LMU. Accessed 11.06.07)

> I am one of five children and I live with my parents, my father cultivates other's land, and we do not have enough rice.... My parents will have to provide dowry for my marriage, especially as my complexion is black... In addition, my parents have to bear other expenses of the marriage. All together it could be nearly 30-35,000 taka. (LH 21, Muktagacha, February 2007)

Crime, the use of violence, and corruption are other high risk factors. Poor people are often the victims of crime with little power to do anything about it. Very few women in the survey said that they had problems with violence or a fear of crime, only 8% of Fair Trade Producers and 12 % of the Other Women.[40] However, when all the women were asked what they would do, whom they would call on for help in the event of violence or crime against their family, the responses were interesting. Seeking help from village leaders was the most common response from both groups. Very few saw the police as a source of assistance. Unfortunately, large numbers of women, 29% of FTP, and 39% of OW, feel they have no way of responding to situations of crime and violence.

Response to violence or crime	FTP numbers	FTP percentage	OW numbers	OW percentage
Do nothing (and no response)	79	29%	101	39%
Go to relatives	22	8%	23	9%
Village leaders	144	53%	123	48%
Other Women	10	4%	3	1%
The police	16	6%	5	2%
Totals	271	100%	255	100%

Note: χ^2=29.55 df = 11 p = 0.002

Table 7.11 Response to violence or crime

The data from the survey were supported by stories from the women about their experiences of crime, violence and corruption

From Fair Trade Producers:

> My situation is much worse. Everything was stolen. The police wanted a bribe to do something. Even the village people wanted a bribe before they would help us. (Survey 116, Kaliganj, January 2005)

> Our landlords are a problem. The rents are raised each year. Sometimes the water is cut off... the government says it is not their responsibility. (Focus Group, Mirpur, January 2005)

[40] The women were not asked directly about domestic violence, but some did mention it during their interviews, mainly to suggest that violence was less when their status had improved as a result of earning an income. In a multi-country study by WHO undertaken in 2002-2003, 53% of ever married women in Dhaka reported physical or sexual abuse, and 62% of ever married women from a rural area (Matalab) reported physical or sexual abuse. (www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study Accessed 7.06.07)

> Once we borrowed 4,000 taka as a loan to bribe the authority to help my daughter to get a job. But, it did not work. We had to pay back the money with interest. (LH 10, Kaliganj, April 2005)

From Other Women:

> My husband teaches in a Primary School. He has not been paid for several months. (Survey 139, Kaliganj, January 2005)
>
> My son was killed by another man from our village. We went to the police, but they did nothing. We went to the village council, but they also did nothing. We kept asking them. Finally, they said the man responsible could not return to the village. That is all. (Survey 455, Shariatpur, February 2005)
>
> My husband is a rickshaw puller, but in the flood someone stole his rickshaw. We did nothing – what can we do? (Survey 555, Badda, February 2005)

It is unrealistic to expect Fair Trade employment to be able to deal with all the problems that poor people face in Bangladesh. Extra income does help, as do improved confidence and better relationships, but this cannot make up for corrupt institutions. Fair Trade Producers continue to face the same risks as other poor women. The quantitative data shows that FTP, as a group, do better than OW, in dealing with crisis, and qualitative sources often suggested that they felt stronger, and more able to deal with problems and crises as a result, mainly, of being part of a group and having an income. But, there are still many Fair Trade women who do not appear to be able to cope well with crises.

7.4.2 The importance of learning transferable skills

A recent study identified overpopulation, inadequate investment in education and health care, and a lack of sufficient physical capital and skills amongst the poor, as obstacles to poverty reduction in Bangladesh (Hossain 2004). Fair Trade employment makes a contribution to two of these obstacles, through a higher income that contributes to increased education and health care, and through investment in handicraft skills and product development that contributes to improved skills and physical capital. The handicraft skills can be used not only to produce exports but also to make products for local markets. People may extend their handicraft skills to acquire an additional skill, such as embroiderers becoming self-employed tailors. This is happening to a limited extent, particularly with the jute women in Madhupur and the embroidery women in Tongi/Badda. Finally, the 'learning by doing' leads to improved human capital (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000: 5) where women,

outside of the Fair Trade networks, learn skills through sub-contracting or observation which can improve their chances of supporting their families.

The combination of having a transferable skill, as well as an increase in status and confidence, provide the Fair Trade women with a greater sense of security. As a more valued wife, it is less likely that they will be divorced or abandoned, or that their husbands will take a second wife. But if they are abandoned, or widowed they do have some means to support their families. This would also be true for the women who were married to drug addicts, alcoholics, or gamblers. While still poor, they have the means to provide, when without their Fair Trade work they would be destitute. In a society which does not have a welfare state, or a means of support other than family, and where many people do not have adequate jobs, this thought is a great comfort to the women. The sense of being able to provide for the future came out in discussions with the focus groups when they were asked what they would do if there was no more work from the SFTO. In each case the women felt they could use their handicraft and social skills to engage in a new economic activity:

> As a group we have taken three loans from Craftfair which we used to buy a sewing machine to make bags, but we also use this for our own enterprises, or for when one of our members has a special need or crisis. If Craftfair collapsed we would be independent and set up our own businesses. (Focus Group, Mirpur January 2005)
>
> We would use our skills and be independent and make products for local markets, though local markets pay less. There are no other opportunities for paid employment in the village, but we have our income projects like calf-rearing and market gardens. (Focus Group, Kaliganj, January 2005)
>
> If we had no more work from Craftfair we would use the money we have saved to start up a small business, to buy land, or buy poultry. We could not use our handicraft skills to make things for the local market... the pay is too little. (Focus Group, Kallakair, January 2005)

Having a marketable skill helps in times of crisis because it can be a means to engage in new economic activity. This helps to deal with transitory poverty by providing for additional incomes in times of stress. In this way, FTP are less likely, though not inevitably, to become poorer at times of crisis (McCulloch and Baulch 2000).

7.4.3 Access to savings and loans

Another benefit that is offered to many Fair Trade Producers is the savings and loans schemes. Unlike micro-finance, where groups of women borrow small sums which they have to pay back with interest, usually to an NGO, the SFTOs discussed here set up savings schemes where the women save for several years, and then are able to borrow against their savings. Thus they are never in debt. An increase in debt can happen if a micro-enterprise fails or loans are used for expenditure.

> Our financial condition has deteriorated. After my husband lost his job, he started a business with a loan from ASHA[41], but could not make it work for many reasons... The business failed. (Survey 547, Badda, February 2005)

At the monthly meeting of the producer groups (or at meetings at production centres) the women bring small sums to be banked, or a set amount is taken from their wages to be put into their savings account. Many of the Fair Trade women spoke of how using loans from their savings accounts had helped them through a particularly bad period or to increase their household assets[42].

> My husband has to borrow from a moneylender at 10% interest each month. It is better that I get a loan to help him. (Survey 724, Muktagacha, March 2005)

> We owned land but had to sell it to pay for my husband's medical care. Now I am a widow. I make handicrafts, and with a loan I am buying back the land. (Survey 234, Madhupur, January 2005)

> I received a loan from the group and bought a calf. Now it is grown up. It produces about 6 litres of milk a day.... we are able to have milk each day. I bought it about 15 years ago. I was able to return the loan in two years. (LH 15, Kallakair, November 2005)

7.4.4 The economic value of improved relationships

Another important characteristic of Fair Trade employment follows on from the above, and was stated in many of the interviews: that their relationships with their families had generally improved as a result of being a Fair Trade producer and having an income. This was often with their husbands, but could be with a mother-in-law or other relative.

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[41] ASHA, Asian Women's Self-help Association, is a large NGO, active in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan.

[42] These loans are not included in the survey questions on debt and loans (Table 7.4), as the Fair Trade Producers did not see them as 'being in debt', since it was borrowing against savings.

> Even though my income is low it improves my situation in the family, I can contribute to family necessities. (Survey 708, Muktagacha, March 2005)

A better relationship with family members, coupled with their improved status has given some Fair Trade Producers the opportunity to develop new businesses.

> I earn something from the jute handicrafts…. Craftfair gave me a 5,000 taka loan…. I spend 30,000 taka a month in the business and get 40,000 taka in return. Often the chickens get attacked by diseases. It takes about 1 – 1 ½ months to sell all the chickens. The income varies from month to month… (LH 14, Kallakair, November 2005)

This sense of improved relationships was not so evident in the comments from the women in other paid work, with few opportunities for social development. They often merely handed over their wage to a male relative, expressing little sense of improved status.

> I am a widow. I have worked in a bank, as a cleaner, for 20 years. I give my income to my son. (Survey 866, Mymensingh, March 2005)

The Fair Trade Producers also have the experience of new types of relationships – with male managers at the Production Centres and with field workers from SFTOs who visit the villages. Some of them also meet staff at the organizations in Dhaka (See Picture 7.3).

Picture 7.3 Quality control, producers bring their products to Dhaka

Whereas purdah "is indeed more profoundly about excluding women from large sectors of the economic and social life" (Amin 1997: 220), Fair Trade production can provide additional social contact for the women producers. It is not just a job, but gives them the opportunity to widen their knowledge and to have contact with other people, contributing to "their stock of social capital" (Blair 2005: 926). It is very difficult to measure the impact of social capital, though it is likely to be a "powerful influence on the fortunes of some households" (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000: 17). A study of economic mobility in Bangladesh found that the ascending households were able to accumulate "human, physical, and financial assets" in order to diversify "both within and outside the agricultural arena" (Sen and Hulme 2005: 7). Thus a significant difference between Fair Trade employment and other types of paid work appears to be the opportunity to develop social skills and to learn to manage relationships with supervisors and managers. This is not to claim that there are no conflicts or difficulties in maintaining relationship between supporting organizations and the producer groups. Perhaps the important point is that individual women producers now feel a responsibility to solve such problems, and not to passively accept whatever happens to them.

> I joined the group when I gave birth to my elder boy. He is now 32 years old. I did not stay in the group for long, as there was some conflict. They did not have enough sewing machines so there was competition.... after 10 years, I joined the group again. I have been involved for 22 years. (LH6, Jalchatra, April 2005)

Thus, the improved relationships that Fair Trade Producers report have a number of direct economic benefits. First, it gives them more confidence and improves their ability to be good handicraft producers. Improved relationships often means that the men give their support (allowing the women to travel to Dhaka) and provide help with practical tasks (such as hiring vehicles). Finally, gaining experience of different types of relationships, with people outside the family, is part of the social capital which some women can use in order to diversify into non-agricultural livelihoods (Sen and Hulme 2005).

7.4.5 Conclusion: the impact on transitory poverty

There are several features of Fair Trade employment that have a positive impact on transitory poverty. The quantitative data show positive trends between FTP and the ability to manage risks and crises. But, this is only a trend, and while good, some women producers have not been so fortunate. Having marketable skills, which can lead to

different economic activities, and access to savings, helps to 'smooth out' poverty in difficult times (McCulloch and Baulch 2000), The four SFTOs provide a range of social protection schemes (Table 6.2) that are viewed as essential to tackling transitory poverty (Sen and Hulme 2005), particularly vulnerability in old age. Finally, improved relationships within the family, and experience of new types of relationships outside of the family, help to improve their ability as artisans and to gain social capital that may lead to new economic activities. Such aspects of the Fair Trade employment structure appear as important as the actual level of the 'fair wage'.

7.5 Assessing the impact of improved economic wellbeing

This Section will consider whether the combination of improved economic wellbeing (the income), the additional social and financial benefits of Fair Trade employment, and the ability to engage in other livelihood strategies (section 7.3), have combined to improve the overall status of the producers and their families (Murthy and Sankaran 1999). The combination of social and economic aspects of Fair Trade employment link to Sen's conceptualization of poverty (Sen 1999), where improving endowments (for example learning marketable skills or having a savings scheme) and entitlements (giving producers some opportunity to influence the actions of SFTOs or having activities that improve the voice of women) have an impact on their capacities, which in turn, can lead to an improved economic situation, as well as a change in their relationship with other social groups. Improved wellbeing will be considered in terms of the perception of their status, changes in rank within their village/community, and an assessment of the most important reasons for change in their lives over the last view years.

7.5.1 Perceptions of status

The low status of women in Bangladesh was discussed in Chapter 4, where women are dependent on the decisions of male relatives and have little opportunity to influence family or public decisions. They are viewed as a financial burden (Section 4.1.2), and the work they do, whether for the family directly or to support family businesses, is given scant status. However, the Fair Trade Producers (FTP) consistently said, in life histories and in focus groups that their status had improved within their families, and also within their community as a result of being a producer and having an income. This is in contrast to

Other Women (OW) who had paid work who often felt that they had less respect, for example those working in garment factories or as paid field labourers.

> I used to work in a garment factory. It was not pleasant. There was a lot of cursing. Now I work for Bithi, it is a better place, the environment is better and it is more social, working with the other girls... (LH 5, Badda, March 2005)

Such statements were supported by the quantitative data (Table 7.12), where 55% of FTP but only 35 % of OW who had paid work said their status had improved. In addition, 25% of the Other Women in paid work felt their situation had become worse.[43] This suggests that paid work on its own does not necessarily improve the status of women, but that the likelihood of this is greater when the woman is in Fair Trade employment.

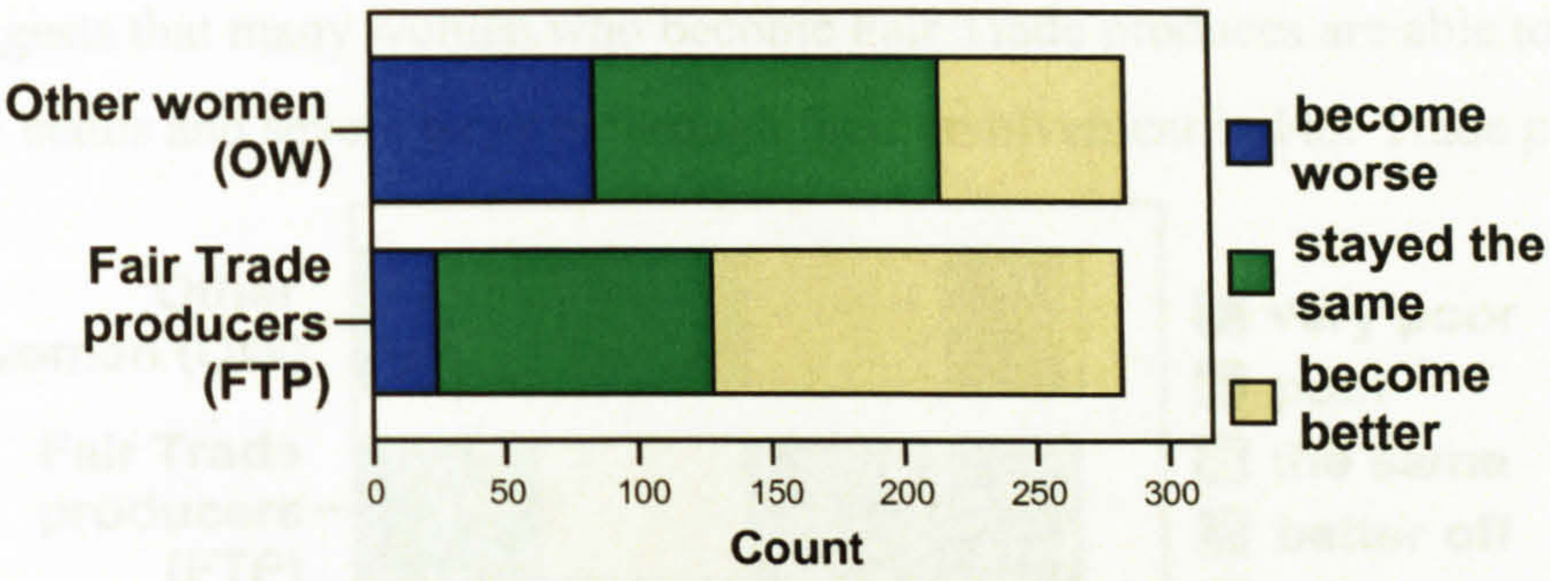
	FTP number	FTP percentage	OW number	OW percentage
Status is worse	24	8%	27	25%
Status is the same	104	37%	43	40%
Status is better	154	55%	38	35%
Totals	282	100%	108	100%

Note: $\chi^2 = 79.689$ d f =10 $p<0.0005$

Table 7.12 Perceived change in status for women who have paid work

All the women in the survey were asked if they thought their status had become better or worse over the last five years (Figure 7.1). The respondents included both economic and social criteria, such as having an income, better relationships and improved sense of wellbeing in their idea of 'status'. Fair Trade Producers were more than twice as likely to say their status had improved, though many Fair Trade women said that their status was the same, and a few that the situation was worse. This could be because of another circumstance, the death of a family member, or that they had been a Fair Trade producer for many years, where the benefits had been felt by them for longer than the last five years. Only a minority of the OW said their status had improved, most feeling that they were the same, or had worse status.

[43] There were two areas where many FTP felt their status had not improved (Mymensingh) or was the same (Madhupur). This is discussed further in Chapter 9.



Note: $\chi^2 = 67.716$ df = 2 $p<0.0005$ Note: FTP = 282 OW =284

Figure 7.1 Perception of change in status over the last five years

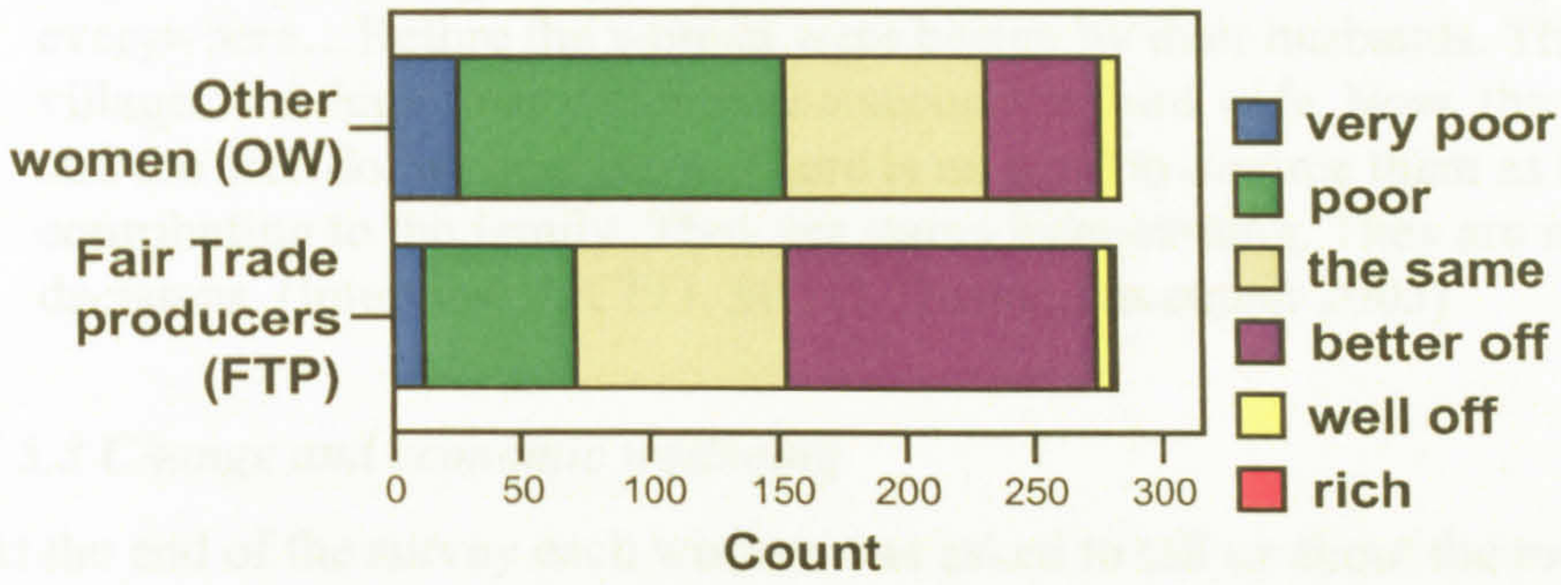
The improved status felt by FTP could have a direct economic benefit to the women. They often felt they had a right to paid work, and were able to do it well – new ideas in rural Bangladesh. If they lost their work with the SFTOs, some producers said they would try and set up their own business or use their handicraft skill to make products for local markets (Section 7.4.2). These are relatively radical economic strategies for rural women. Finally, as previous quotations have shown, FTPs do need the support of the men in their families, and if their status has improved, then the men are much more likely to offer this help willingly. Access to credit, increased confidence, and agreement of male relatives has allowed women to develop small enterprises, such as the vegetable gardens and calf rearing, particularly in Kallakair and Kaliganj.

7.5.2 Change in rank

Rank is a subjective judgement and refers to how women saw themselves and their family in relation to other families in their village, both economically and socially. Almost half of the women (41%) in the producer groups are widowed, abandoned, separated, or with husbands who cannot or do not work. This means that the FTP often started at a very low rank within their community because they did not have male relatives taking care of them and women are often blamed if marriages fail (Section 4.1.3). All the women in the survey were asked to rank themselves in relation to other people in their local community. Fair Trade Producers (FTP) were again much more likely to say that their rank was better (Figure 7.2). The OW were more likely to view themselves as poor, or very poor[44]. This

[44] Eight FTP and eight OW identified themselves as 'rich' (red column).

suggests that many women who become Fair Trade produces are able to overcome initial low status and severe poverty through their involvement in Fair Trade production



Note: $\chi^2 = 68.287$ df = 5 $p<0.0005$ Note: FTP =282 OW = 284.

Figure 7.2 Perception of their rank in their village/community

The producers, in the survey, the focus groups and life histories, frequently discussed why they thought their status (Figure 7.1), and the relative position (rank) of their household (Figure 7.2), had often improved. Their reasons demonstrate the way in which economic and social factors are linked. Such reasons included:

- earning an income through their own labour
- acquiring new knowledge and having new experiences that improved their confidence and ability to negotiate with relatives
- being seen as competent and capable

Income was overwhelmingly identified as the most important contribution to their new-found status, and other achievements such as confidence and new skills flowed from that. Often the benefits were seen as influencing and related to each other.

> Women can now talk and discuss, they can go to each other's houses easily. Before, they stayed in their own homes. We have more money and so have better food, now two to three meals a day when before we only had one, and also we have better clothes. (Focus Group, Kallakair, January 2005).

These benefits help to improve the economic and social position of the families. Improved health will come as a result of more and better food. Better clothes and food will mean that sons and daughters are better prepared for school, husbands are better able to work. By discussing issues as a group the women can find solutions to some of their problems. The household functions better and women get some of the credit for this.

...many of the families depend on the woman's wage. They buy land, and sometimes buy rickshaws for their husbands. Some men are very helpful, they support the women, help with collecting the products. But some do not work. This happens everywhere...Before the women were beaten by their husbands. The divorce rate in the villages was high; many men take a second or third wife. Now, the women are working and the men do not beat them. There is no need to divorce them as they are earning and contributing to the family. They get status from earning. They are more involved in decisions. (Interview 3, CEO, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005)

7.5.3 Change and economic wellbeing

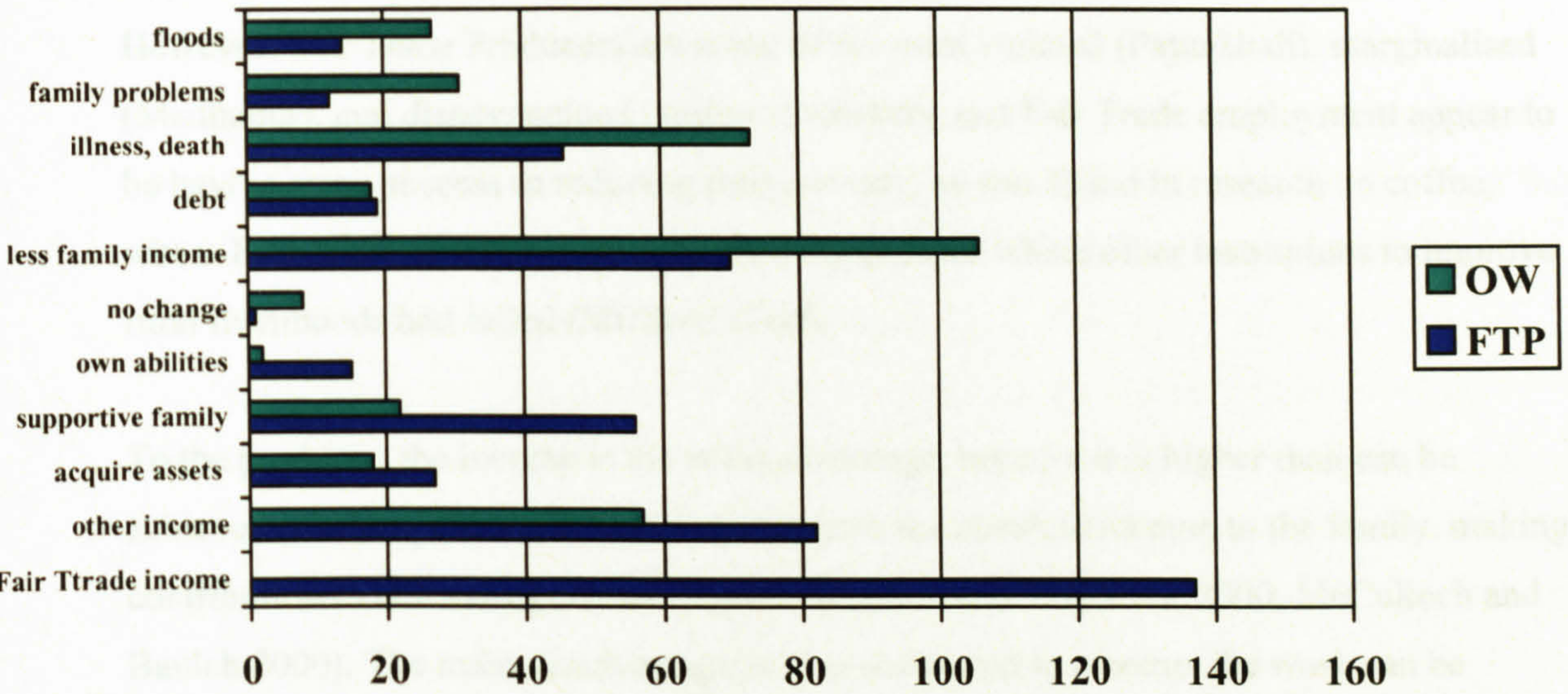
At the end of the survey each woman was asked to tell us about the most significant changes in her life over the last five years. The FTP were much more likely to say that change had been good, and link it to status or income (Table 7.13). The OW were more likely to have seen no change or negative change over the last five years. The responses of all the women were usually linked to income, whether they had more or less household income, and income was often the underlying reason given for an improvement or lessening of status.

	FTP number	FTP percentage	OW number	OW percentage
Income worse	21	8%	48	18%
Status worse	43	16%	93	34%
Little change	36	13%	65	24%
Improved status	18	7%	10	4%
Improved income	63	24%	22	8%
Improved status and income	86	32%	32	12%
Totals	267	100%	271	100%

Note: χ^2=84.658 df = 5 p<0.0005 Note: FTP = 267 OW=271

Table 7.13 Most important changes in the last five years

The women were then asked to tell us the reasons for the changes, and they could give as many responses as they liked. Again, the reasons for important changes (Figure 7.3) were also often linked to the ability to maintain paid work. The income paid by Fair Trade is the most important cause of positive change for FTP. For the OW in the survey the most common reasons for change is 'less family income' and 'illness or death'. The FTP were much more likely to give positive reasons for change (the bottom five categories), whereas the OW tended to speak of negative factors (the top five categories).



Note: $\chi^2 = 65.194$ df =4 p<0.0005 Note: FTP = 246 OW=218.

Figure 7.3 Reasons given for most important changes in the last five years

7.6 Conclusion: the impact of Fair Trade on poverty in Bangladesh

The data from qualitative sources, focus group discussions, life histories and interviews, are overwhelmingly positive about the impact of Fair Trade on their experience of poverty. The Fair Trade Producers (FTP) consistently, in all but Mymensingh (discussed further in Section 9.7.2), presented a more optimistic assessment of their lives than that of the Other Women (OW), even those who had paid work. Producers were generally supportive and appreciative of the advantages, where social advantages (such as group support and confidence) were often interpreted in economic terms, and the 'Other Women' did appear to be poorer, less confident, and with fewer choices than the Fair Trade Producers.

The quantitative data tell a slightly less optimistic story. While showing that the FTP often had better access to food, education, and assets in part as a result of higher income, the data also highlighted the similarities between the two groups of women. They were experiencing the same risks (un Nabi et al 2002), often had the same food, used any income for the same purposes, and had to find additional sources of income for exceptional events. While the trend was towards increases in status and in rank of the FTP, and they were better able to overcome risks factors such as flooding, and illness, there were some women producers who felt there had been little improvement in their lives. The quantitative data does not

disprove the qualitative information, but supports a more cautious interpretation of impact. However, Fair Trade Producers are some of the most isolated (Patuakhali), marginalised (Madhupur), and disadvantaged (widows) workers, and Fair Trade employment appear to be having some success in reducing their poverty, as was found in research on coffee, where Fair Trade co-operatives were thriving in areas where other institutions to improve rural livelihoods had failed (Millford 2004).

To the producer, the income is the main advantage, because it is higher than can be achieved in other paid work, and thus increases the absolute income to the family, making a contribution to alleviating chronic poverty (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000, McCulloch and Baulch 2000). The main disadvantage is also connected to income: the work can be irregular for all groups of producers, many of whom would like full-time rather than part-time work. Additional financial benefits (see Table 6.2), marketable skills, learning about urban institutions, and gaining confidence in their own ability, help to address transitory poverty, as they have additional income to draw on in lean times, and can use their skills to explore new types of income generating activities. Such additional aspects of Fair Trade employment contribute to achieving a sense of security, particularly at times of crisis or in older age, which is as important for wellbeing as the level of income (Graham 2004, Devine, Camfield et al 2006, White 2006). It would also seem that handicraft production supports other livelihood strategies, and that FT households appear economically active, though the workloads of women are increasing.

The potential for reducing poverty is directly linked to the meanings and objectives attributed to 'Fair Trade' and to 'development' by the SFTOs (Sections 5.3 and 5.4), and to the institutional practices and social relationships between SFTOs and their producers (Section 6.4). While Northern conceptualizations focus on a 'fair wage', which contribute to reducing chronic poverty, Southern practices also deal with transitory poverty through a range of institutional practices and additional benefits to producers. As Sen (1999) argues, increased entitlements and endowments improve the chances of the poor to escape poverty. The ways in which Fair Trade production is organised appears to provide a number of additional social advantages to women in Bangladesh that can contribute to economic activity (Murthy and Sankaran 1999, Baulch and Hoddinott 2000): they meet new people and learn about new ideas, they may develop social skills through the growth of a new

social network, and some of the women develop new relationships outside of traditional patron/client relationships which can lead to new economic activity.

This research has highlighted two areas for future research. It would be useful to track the transition in rural areas (Garrett and Chowdhury 2004), and to see whether contact with Fair Trade helps households to move into new non-agricultural economic activities. Secondly, it would be valuable to do research on inter-generational change, to see if the children of FTP are able to obtain better paid work and to acquire additional assets. The following quotation illustrates some of the changes that have occurred within the lifetime of the producer, between her childhood and that of her children.

> I use to work in a biri [a cigarette factory]. That time my salary was very low, 15 to 20 taka a day. My father is a farmer, we were six children... often we had little food, and borrowing money and food were common... My brothers stopped schooling, and my sister is illiterate like me. ... My marriage life was also tragic. I was married at 15 or 16, but after three months my husband discarded me.... I got a job here (HMP Muktagacha) and then I got married again. I have worked here for 10 years. My husband comes to pick me up using his bicycle. We have two sons, one is ten and one is five, and the elder is in class five.... My husband is doing sharecropping on other people's land. Normally I save and spend my income on my son's schooling. I realise that it is only possible as I am working here. I hope for a better life, and for my children. It would be great if I can educate my children and arrange a job for them. I also wish to buy my own land and to cultivate it myself. (LH 18, Muktagacha, February 2007)

This woman now earns 1500-2000 taka a month[45], which is roughly 65-85 taka a day, whereas before she was earning 15-20 taka a day. She has two children, where her parents had six children. She considers herself illiterate, but she is able to educate her children. As a child she did not have enough food, but now she is able to feed her family. She has hopes and plans for the future. While still poor, her life has improved, and a significant factor in that improvement was getting a job at a Fair Trade HMP company.

In summary, Fair Trade employment (a fair wage), combined with the institutional practices and additional benefits given by SFTOs, have a positive impact on the lives of many producers in my study by reducing the effects of both chronic and transitory poverty,

[45] The average monthly wage for women in Bangladesh is 685 taka (Section 7.2.2).

and such economic improvements have led to increased wellbeing of the household, improving their chances and those of their children for the future. However, it is not the case that Fair Trade employment, on its own, can lift people out of poverty as the income is still too small for all the needs of the family, and other important institutions have a considerable impact on their lives as well.

Chapter 8 Continuity and Change: processes of change and empowerment

Would you consider yourself a feminist?

> No... No, I am not a feminist. I want women and men to respect each other. I want a right judgement – not feminist. Men in Bangladesh not think much about what they do and this is wrong. (Interview 2, Director, SFTO, Dhaka, November 2005)

8.1 Introduction

The quotation expresses the difficulty in linking theory to personal experience, particularly in a cross-cultural context. The woman uses a description that would be understood widely as feminist – wanting respect between men and women, and for men to think about what they do – as a means of *differentiating* herself from feminism. I felt she was one of the most committed 'feminists' I had ever met (Research Diary, Dhaka, November 2005). Feminism and insights from feminist research have informed a desire to help women become more empowered, and the empowerment of producers is a fundamental goal of Fair Trade production (see Chapter 4). As feminism is a contested concept, so too are the definitions of empowerment. "Gender equity and women's empowerment are concepts that refer to social relations and processes" (Santillán, Schuler et al 2004: 534), and therefore require the analysis to be located in a specific social, economic and political context (Amin 1997, Haque 2002, Salway, Jesmin et al 2005). [46]

> Just as water takes the shape of the container it is in, feminism is articulated in different ways, depending on local structures and issues. (Bhasin 2005: 2)

The main focus of this chapter is to consider the changes which are experienced by the producers, to draw on the theoretical perspectives discussed in Section 4.2 (Moser 1989, Rowlands 1997, Mosedale 2005) and to highlight "women's own account of their lived and embodied experiences" (Haque 2002: 41). Asian and Bangladeshi writings on empowerment are used as a means of understanding what Bangladeshi women want, in particular their ideas on women's rights and empowerment. The definition given in Section 4.2.3 will be drawn on throughout this chapter.

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[46] There are many different types of feminism. Particularly in the West, there have been radical, socialist and liberal feminists. In the context of Bangladesh, it is mainly the liberal approach to feminism that is applied, focusing on equal opportunities for women and working with men.

> Empowerment is the process of gaining power over one's life to increase welfare, both in absolute and in a relative sense, and reduce subordination through the expansion of choice and by achieving the capacity to exercise agency in choosing. (Mahmud 2002: 9)

Such aspects of change and of empowerment in their lives were raised by many of the women, and have given the structure to this chapter. Section 8.2 discusses women's choices for paid employment, and aspects of paid work situations that they have identified as important to their welfare, including how Fair Trade employment matches those concerns. Section 8.3 discusses change outside of paid employment and the influence of services of NGOs and government. Section 8.4 considers two other important criteria of change for women: having a voice and being listened to. In this Section involvement in decision-making, experience of collective action, and ability to articulate and achieve their hopes for the future are used to consider their evolving role within the family and beyond. Throughout these sections attention is drawn to the uses of power, and the constraints on women's own agency, and their ability to achieve more effective change. The conclusion, Section 8.5, draws these themes together and analyses change in terms of the theoretical approaches, in particular power as theorised by Rowlands (1997) and other feminists, and change in terms of addressing women's practical and strategic needs (Kabeer 1999). First, it is useful to consider how empowerment has been used in the literature about Fair Trade.

8.1.1 Empowerment in Fair Trade

Literature from within the Fair Trade movement is disappointing in its analysis of empowerment. Impact studies of Fair Trade and literature from Fair Trade organizations tend to use the word 'empowerment' liberally. In a recent book on Fair Trade, the chapter on measuring impact used the term empowerment 11 times; sometimes as gender empowerment and sometimes as producer empowerment, or as individual and community empowerment, yet there were no definitions (Nicholls and Opal 2005, Chapter 9), though examples were given of what contributes to empowerment: information, finance, good working relationships, development of civic networks, and action to lobby government (Nicholls and Opal 2005: 226). There is often a lack of clarity as to whether empowerment refers to individuals or to the improvement and sustainability of producer organizations. Research into coffee co-operatives has raised the distinction between the perceived empowerment of producer *organizations* (Nigh 2002, Murray, Raynolds et al 2006), and

the limitations of empowering *individual* producers or farmers. Some studies have attempted to look at gender issues (Villaseñor 2000, Morsello 2002, Tallontire, Dolan et al 2005, Utting-Chamorro 2005), but a need for more targeted research on gender issues and their relevance to empowerment (Tallontire, Smith et al 2004, Becchetti and Constantino 2005, Poncelet 2005) is a common theme in many studies (see Tables 2.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8). Recent writings in ethical trade call for more attention to issues related to empowerment (Hale and Opondo 2005), as "social codes have not necessarily achieved better outcomes for women and informal workers, owing to the gendered economy" (Tallontire, Dolan et al 2005: 559). An attempt to link gender issues, empowerment, and practices of Fairtrade is provided in a recent study by the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO), and while considering examples of best practice it was "not meant to be an impact study", and "the views of producers are not included" (Wach 2006: 4).

Promotional materials tend to assume that being a Fair Trade producer will lead to empowerment (see Picture 8.1). Current understandings on the 'empowerment of producers' appear to often be based on value position, intuition, or anecdotal evidence, with limited impact assessments with producers. This poster (Picture 8.1) and the brief description implies the following: that the decision was hers to remain in the village, that handicraft production is preferable to working in a factory, and that having an income leads to empowerment. It also suggests that women are similar. This simple message might be useful for selling products, but it is a misleading message about the complex processes involved in the empowerment of individual women.

Fair Trade Organizations (FTOs) do examine power relations within markets and global trade through supply chains analysis (Hinton 2003, Gent and Braithwaite 2005, van Dooren 2005). While representations of Fair Trade appear to view market access and having a wage as the main means of empowerment, including addressing gender disempowerment, there is a considerable body of research which rejects this view, arguing that "concentrating solely on the process of production ignores other fundamental causes of gender subordination" (Young, Wolkowitz 1981: x). Often the decision to work is not hers, is controlled by men and is linked to family wellbeing, not personal wellbeing. A recent study in Bangladesh on the increasing participation of women in the labour force found that women's agency is severely restricted.

Empower

25 YEARS OF LEADING THE WAY

Your support will help us empower more women like Lampan.

Lampan Chomthong has been involved in silk weaving for seven years now, after being taught the skill by her Mother and her Aunt. Working with the Pan Mai silk weavers, in Thailand, has enabled her to earn a good income in her home village, rather than having to remain working in a factory in the city.

Traidcraft

Fighting poverty through trade
www.traidcraft.co.uk

Picture 8.1 Poster 'empower'

> Men's general opinions are that it is acceptable for a woman to work to contribute to household income.... men (and many women) justify women's work not for the sake of the woman's personal wellbeing, but for the wellbeing of the family. ...work is not undertaken to enhance women's capabilities or wellbeing.... (Gibson, Mahmud et al 2004: 8)

There also tends to be an implicit assumption in literature from within Fair Trade that a Fair Trade partnership through local organizations will inevitably lead to empowered producers. However, there are significant differences between SFTOs, and between SFTOs and NFTOs in their understandings of and strategies to encourage (or to avoid) empowerment. It may be the case that the level of empowerment is constrained. Work by Mendoza and Bastiaensen on Nicaraguan coffee co-operatives suggests that co-operatives can be inefficient, and copy, rather than challenge, unequal and "clientelistic modes of organization" (Mendoza and Bastiaensen 2003, cited in Nicholls and Opal 2005: 212), and that understandings and benefits of Fair Trade can be unequally distributed between, on the one hand, the leaders and managers of cooperatives, and on the other hand, the individual farmers. It is also possible that some SFTO partner organizations are replicating, rather than challenging existing inequalities and that such organizations themselves are "unable to accommodate the empowerment of women", where such empowerment would actually be threatening to the agencies (Mosedale 2005: 47). Bebbington analysed the "everyday and organised practices" of NGOs committed to 'empowerment' in Bangladesh, and found that many of their institutional practices (for example hierarchical decision-making and management, as well as power relationships within the NGOs) actually undermined their stated goals (Bebbington, Lewis et al 2007: 612). Supporting the social and economic empowerment of poor people, and of women, requires long-lasting *institutional* change, which is, in fact, difficult to achieve. Thus, it is very important in assessing the impact of Fair Trade employment to also assess the roles of the SFTOs and NFTOs in the particular situation and social context.

In their extensive studies of artisans, Littrell and Dickson found that producers saw "gaining independence and control over one's life" and "shifts in local patronage relationships" (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 38-40) as indicators of achieving greater empowerment. The paradox of Fair Trade marketing is, on the one hand, the aim of "social responsibility to the artisans", while, on the other hand, "adopting practices that give greater attention to the consumer" (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 24). This paradox often leads

to simplistic messages about achievements. Criteria identified by producers, such as gaining independence and changes in power relations, are much more complex to achieve and measure (and to communicate to consumers) than increased market access, quantity of sales, and higher prices paid to the producer, which may all occur without any substantial change in class or gender relationships. Too often giving a 'fair wage' or providing work to women is equated with empowerment. Stronger trading companies and/or improving the market activity of an individual does not necessarily lead to their personal empowerment in relation to men or other powerful groups in society. The process of empowerment within Fair Trade needs to be analysed in terms of specific markets (products), cultures, and gender, and to better explain the links between being an active market agent and the process of empowerment for individuals in particular societies.

8.1.2 Measuring change

I have drawn on the extensive literature on assessing empowerment (Kabeer 1999, Narayan 2002, Santillán, Schuler et al 2004, Mayoux and Chambers 2005), empowerment in relation to micro-finance (Sharif 2002, Hunt and Kasynathan 2001, Izugbara 2004, Mayoux 2005), and selected studies on Fair Trade and ethical trade initiatives (Mayoux 2004). Insights from research into home based workers (Kantor 2003, Pearson 2004), and development projects in Bangladesh (Amin 1997, Halder 2003, Baruah 2004, Maddox 2005), as well as research on women working in the garment industry (Kabeer 1994, 1997, 2000, 2004, Salway, Jesmin et al 2005) have also provided useful ways of thinking about Fair Trade employment and its impact on women producers. The possibility of understanding, assessing, and attributing change and continuities is problematic and contingent to specific times and places. Nevertheless, it is still important to make an attempt.

It is not only change captured by answers to selected 'indicators' which are important, but also what the women *do* with the change that are critical for assessing the potential for empowerment. It is also necessary to consider individual gains in relation to social and economic structures, including the practices of Fair Trade organizations (Section 6.4), as individual gains are only sustainable if they are accompanied by policy and institutional changes which allow women, in particular, to hold powerful individuals and organizations to account (Kabeer 2005: 23). Learning from the voices of the women themselves, both change and continuities can be identified from my research, with some of the changes being

examples of empowerment. In Bangladesh, any involvement of women in the public sphere is a sign of radical change (Haque 2002), and small changes in mobility, such as the opportunity to visit neighbours and to travel to Dhaka, as well as having husbands that now 'listen to them' are changes that have considerable significance when placed in their context.

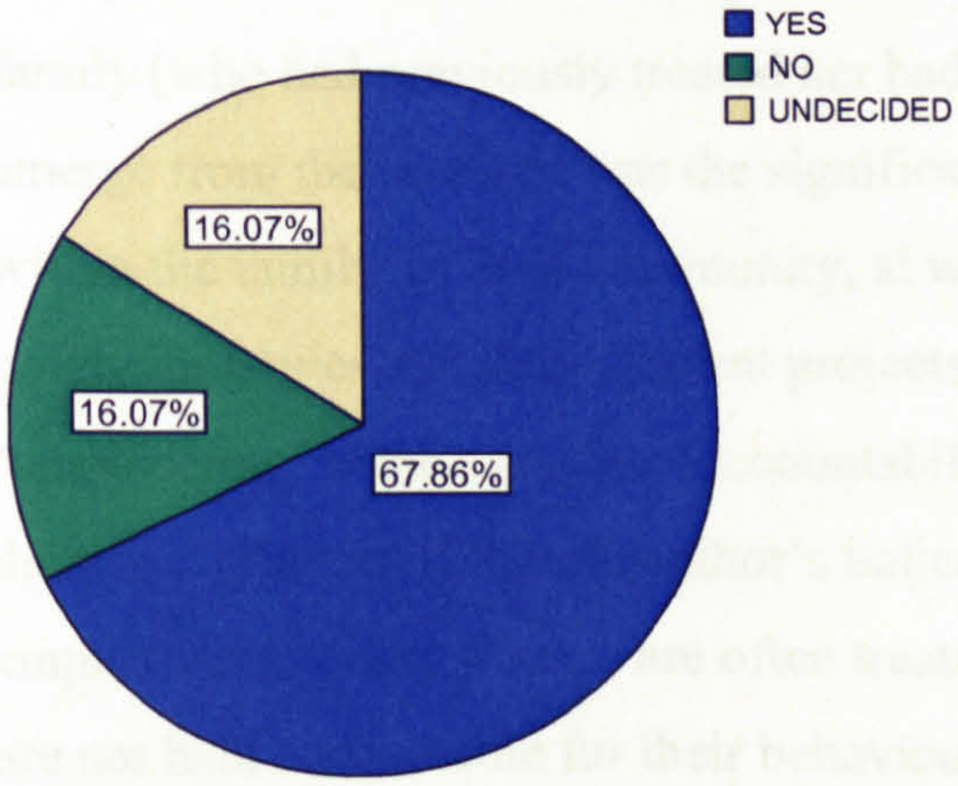
8.2 Change and new opportunities: Fair Trade employment

8.2.1 Fair Trade as a choice

To earn their own income is a relatively new opportunity for many women in Bangladesh (Chapter 4). As many Bangladeshi writers confirm (Amin 1997, Siddique 1998, Haque 2002, Ahmad 2004), the country is experiencing rapid change necessitating a re-negotiation of many of their cultural norms and customary practices. People are finding new ways of relating as the emergence of a modern industrial sector offers paid work tied to the need for increased mobility for both men and women.

> ...gender relationships are not internally cohesive. They contain contradictions and imbalances, particularly when there have been changes in the wider socio-economic environment. (Kabeer 2005: 23)

Handicraft production provides one route to paid work. Although the cultural ideal is that a woman should remain at home cared for by her male relatives, for many women this ideal is not effective in providing a reasonable livelihood. Fair Trade handicraft production was seen by almost everyone in the survey as a good choice. Women who were members of Fair Trade production groups wanted to remain in the group and saw themselves as 'lucky' (Focus Group, Mirpur, January 2005). The women not involved in Fair Trade production were asked if they would like to join such a group, and 68% (190 women) said they would like to, including many who had another source of income (Figure 7.1). The women who said they did not want to join (16%) or were undecided (16%), gave three main reasons for their response: they were elderly and did not wish to take on paid work; their husbands would not allow them to work; and the few women who, being in the fortunate position of being adequately supported by husbands and/or sons, did not need to or want to work outside the home.



Note: n=280

Figure 8.1 Response to the question, Would you like to join a Fair Trade producer group?

The preference for Fair Trade work was consistent across the four handicrafts, even though the structure of employment, and types of relationship varied for the different handicrafts (Section 6.4). However, it was usually unclear whether the desire for paid work was the view of the woman, or a choice dictated by her family, since the reason given for wanting paid work was always couched in terms of family necessity.

8.2.2 The importance of respect

As discussed in the previous chapter (Section 7.5.1), many women in Fair Trade employment record a significant increase in their status. For example, in life history 1, the woman was from an impoverished family who lost their land due to family disputes and whose home in Tongi was destroyed during the War of Liberation (1971). She was unable to get an education and was married at the age of 12. Her husband was ill for a long time, and died due 'to lack of medicine' leaving her with two children. None of her relatives helped her even when she was destitute. When she was given the chance to join a Bithi embroidery group her family were "not supportive". She has been a member for over 20 years and been a group leader. Through doing this work, both paid craft work and developing skills as a group leader, she has been able to gain respect from her family and the community.

> The situation with my family has improved a lot compared to the time when my husband was ill… nowadays I get respect in the society… I also managed to educate my children… and to arrange a good marriage for my daughter. Because I have a good reputation and people trust me I was lent money, to send my two brothers to the Middle East for work, and I was able to return the money. (LH1, Tongi, April 2005)

The quotation illustrates how important it is to this woman to have gained the respect of her family (who had previously treated her badly) and of her community. A common theme to emerge from the research was the significance to the women of being treated with 'respect', within the family, in their community, at work and in public spaces. Kabeer argues that policy initiatives and development projects, however well intentioned, will only be 'empowering' if they provide "accountability, efficiency and *respect* in public service delivery" (Kabeer 1999: 49, author's italics). Such characteristics are also important in employment, where women are often treated without respect and those who behave badly are not held accountable for their behaviour. Research into ethical trade reported that women workers were often subjected to abuse and sexual harassment by their supervisors (Hale and Opondo 2005: 310). Similar accounts of abuse are reported in the garment industry in Bangladesh (Kabeer and Mahmud 2004) and by several of my respondents who worked in garment factories.

> I work in a garment factory... It is just for survival, it is not enjoyable. There is cursing and they use abusive words. There is no respect. (LH 4, Badda, March 2005)

However, none of the Fair Trade women reported such abuse, and indeed spoke of the respect and good relationships that they had with field workers and staff members of the trading organizations. Observation of the Production Centres, and at the two handmade paper factories, would confirm the statements made by the women. Men behaving well towards women in public places, and in the workplace, are important criteria of wellbeing for women in Bangladesh. Such respect allows them to feel good about themselves and to gain in confidence. It improves their potential to have power 'from within' and power 'with' (Rowlands 1997). On this, it would seem that these particular SFTOs in Bangladesh and their staff are meeting an important indicator of wellbeing in the context of increasing social change for the producers.

8.2.3 The changing role of daughters

Some of the women, who have gained increased confidence in themselves and their abilities, and receive more respect from men, are also re-assessing the role of their daughters, a significant change in a culture that traditionally has favoured sons. Recognition

of the value of daughters was another common theme in many of the discussions with respondents.

> We like to have daughters... we prefer girls, they are obedient and helpful.... We want them to be educated, to secondary standard. (Focus Group, Mirpur, January 2005)

Most women, but particularly the FTP, were keen to send their daughters to school, and for them to have good marriages, and to have the possibility of better paid work. While paid work for women is correlated with increased desire to send daughters to school (Kabeer 2001), a more realistic indicator of change is *how long* daughters stay at school. Girls often have to leave school when they marry, or in times of financial crisis when the preference is for boys to continue their education. Many of the older women were married at a young age, some at 12, and left their village and school to join their husbands (LH1, Tongi, LH10, Kaliganj). But, the situation seems to be changing slowly, and most daughters appear now to marry at around 18, some at 16, though there were exceptions and it was difficult to get accurate information on how long girls remained in school.

As more and more girls are educated and some are then able to have a paid income, they are often more willing to look after their parents than the sons, which has contributed to a rise in the status of daughters. The two interlinked changes in traditional society, where woman can no longer rely on life-long support from the men in their families (Section 4.1.4), and where some daughters are now able to provide the valued service of looking after elderly parents, creates a sustained challenge to the patriarchal system.

> These women are not behaving like adult daughters, but like sons in that they are taking on the responsibility of providing for their children and for their parents and siblings. (Ahmed 2004: 1336)

The interviews with the five women who held positions of responsibility in FTOs in Dhaka can be drawn on to demonstrate the changing attitude towards daughters, and how such change is developing new models for family relationships and increasing status for women. Three of these women had decided to only have one child and that child was a daughter: all were forceful in articulating the value of daughters. Two of these successful women were using their own lives and their choice to have only one child as a way of influencing women in the villages.

I have one daughter. I will not have anymore. In the villages the women say, "you take one more child, a son". I say, I will take good care of my daughter, and then she will look after me when I am old. I want to show them that this is possible. (Interview 2, Manager, SFTO, Dhaka, November 2005)

Sometimes I take my husband and my daughter to the villages. I want my daughter to know the villages, to know that she is part of this world, so she feels the way I do, a concern for the women and their suffering. (Interview 3, Manager, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005).

These five successful women have achieved economic and social transformation in their lives, moving away from conservative social norms, obtaining an education (often with great difficulty), and eventually moving into a 'good job' with a SFTO. There was considerable variety in their backgrounds, but one common theme that emerged in their stories was the crucial role played by their mothers (see Box 8.1).

I was given a place at Dhaka University, but my father wanted me to marry and not go to University.... My mother said it was good to educate me because then I could have an educated husband, and also they could ask for educated daughters-in law, so my father agreed. Even then, my father went to Chittagong Hospital and asked there if I could do a nursing course. When asked, I said I wanted to go to university..., One of my aunts said it would be good for me to do social sciences, as it would be helpful in my life, so this is what I took at Dhaka University.... The night I got my degree, my father said, "Now it is time for you to get married". (Interview 1)

My grandfather, my father's father, was a landowner and had much power. Always he was talking about me getting married. When we would go to the village, he would ask, and when they came to the city to visit us, again, "When is she getting married?" He did not want me to study... He convinced my father, who also wanted me to marry and not to study, but my mother said No, she argued with them. My mother fought for me to study. Then, when I was 19 a marriage was arranged...my mother said yes, but with a condition, that my husband allowed me to continue with my education. So, I studied and received an MSc in social science. (Interview 2)

My mother was a staff nurse and a civil servant. We are Hindu. She tried for promotion many times, but did not get it. She left and worked in Libya for eight years when I was 10 years old... I finished my schooling in Dhaka, and then went to Pune University in India. This was very unusual – to send a daughter so far away for study. My mother came to see that I was all right. Then she said, it is okay, I can leave you now, and she went to Canada. She is now a Canadian citizen and lives there. She does not like Bangladesh. She fought for her rights, but got nowhere. (Interview 3)

My mother was always a very good [voluntary] social worker. When there was a disaster, she would collect food and clothes, use the schools, and take things to the villages... I was inspired by my mother, she said, "One cannot live alone". It is my inspiration. My mother was a great influence on me. (Interview 4)

I had a very hard life. I was born in a village and the oldest of 6 children... my mother was a widow. I wanted to finish my HSC [12 years of schooling], and to go to college, but the priest and my aunt said no, my mother could not last the six years while I finished my education. Finally, though, my mother agreed. I went and finished my education.... At first, when I worked people did not approve, but I did not mind. I had to work to support my family. (Interview 5)

Box 8.1 Mothers and daughters, Interviews, Dhaka, November – December 2005

In these cases, one important aspect of improving women's lives and gaining power 'within' and power 'with' is the relationship between women, especially between mothers and daughters. This is a change that is occurring only slowly, but it seems that women working in SFTOs, and the SFTOs as institutions, are facilitating the process and providing opportunities for some women.

8.2.4 Advantages of Fair Trade employment

The producers were given the opportunity to raise any benefits that they felt they received as a result of being involved in Fair Trade. The women could give as many answers as they wished, and such benefits can be seen as their indicators on the value of paid handicraft production. While all saw having an income as the most important aspect of their work, they also appreciated the opportunity to learn new skills, to gain confidence, to see their personal status improve, and to acquire social skills by being part of a group (Table 8.1). For example, many said that because they now have an income, their husbands respect them more and are willing to listen to their views, which increased their confidence and sense of self-worth.

	FTP number	FTP percentage
Having their own income	282	100%
Acquiring new skills	244	87%
Gaining confidence	235	83%
Improving their status	193	68%
Being part of a group	137	49%
Total number of producers	282	

Table 8.1 Perceived benefits of being a Fair Trade handicraft producer

As found in other research (Haque 2002), the women actively negotiate their new sense of worth, which often involves maintaining and extending co-operative relationships with male relatives.

> We are not just dependent on our husbands, but have some money of our own… our husbands now talk to us… our status has grown as a result of being in the group….. when we are busy, getting an order ready, our husbands allow us more time. (Focus Group, Kaliganj, January 2005)

So, while many women want the opportunity for paid work (a change), they want to maintain the family structures (continuity). The handicraft work should support, not challenge, their main household responsibilities.

The opportunity to learn new skills was especially important to the producers, and was discussed in Section 7.4.2, in terms of the economic benefit. However, learning new skills also gave them social benefits, in that they thought better of themselves and it improved their social status. Studies have shown that the wellbeing of craftspeople is improved if they gain skills in product design, and can diversify and produce new products (Girón, Hernández, et al 2004). Thus an increasing role for SFTOs, to build on their success in providing paid work opportunities for women (Section 8.2.1), maintaining respectful relationships (Section 8.2.2), and providing 'good jobs' for some women (Section 8.2.3), is to continue to provide training in a range of product development skills with producers.

8.2.5 Additional learning and its application to their lives

In addition to the learning of handicraft skills, the SFTOs are also trying to provide additional experiences and opportunities to learn (Section 6.4). Many FTP said that being a handicraft producer helped them in other aspects of their lives (see Table 8.2).

	FTP numbers	FTP percentages
Able to meet new people	221	78%
Confidence, more able to deal with problems	218	77%
Increase in mobility and travel	151	54%
Using literacy skills	57	20%
No response	20	7%
Total	282	

Table 8.2 Applying experiences and skills to other aspects of their lives

In particular, opportunities to meet people and to travel were seen as important: that this and increased confidence gave them the ability to do other things, such as going to clinics or visiting relatives. Given the cultural context where women are not expected to leave their home, these experiences demonstrate both courage and significant change in their lives.

> Taking the products to Dhaka is difficult because men insist on being paid. They do not provide us with anything; they just say they will allow us to go on a bus or along a road.....(Focus Group, Kallakair , January 2005)

> The best side of Craftfair is that it provides us with work. Also, we are happy that people like you visit and talk to us. (LH 14, Kallakair, November 2005)

Some of the new experiences are difficult and they learn to cope, such as dealing with extortion on public roads. Other new experiences they enjoy, for example, the opportunities to meet people, where in the past visitors would be seen by men and village leaders. The staff in many SFTOs encourage such new experiences.

> I tell the producers, if you have an opportunity then go, do it. They need to learn about others and to see what they are like. I say, 'Show the world to women and they can do it'. (Interview 3, CEO, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005)

Another important aspect of Fair Trade employment is that some women are given the opportunity to use their literacy and numeracy skills, and thus they do not forget how to read and write. The importance of women's literacy and its impact on their social development has been discussed for many years, for example Kamphoefner in Singerman and Hoodfar (1996) and Ahmad (2002). Maddox sees literacy as a form of human capital used "to manage their poverty, and to reduce the vulnerability and risk involved" (Maddox 2005: 128). It is also a means through which "women negotiate with patriarchy, and struggle to increase their status as well as to produce agency between competing forms of Bengali, Bangladeshi, and Islamic identities" (Kabeer 1989, cited in Maddox 2005: 129). A Fair Trade woman producer who is able to maintain literacy skills is thus in a better position to use her agency in new situations. Jute and terracotta producers are encouraged to read production sheets, handle money, have bank accounts, and arrange for products to be brought to Dhaka. They often meet with the designers when in Dhaka to discuss new products and cost the materials (see Picture 8.2). This gives them contact with the business world and a sense of what is involved in selling products successfully. The embroiderers, working at production centres with supervisors, have less of these responsibilities, though even here, if women are illiterate, then literacy classes can be provided for them (Manager, TDH, Patuakhali, February 2005). This emphasis on and use for literacy is in contrast to other jobs available to these women (housemaids, field labour), where they would have little opportunity to use or develop literacy skills. The women who made handicrafts for commercial buyers (75 in the survey) did not have any of these advantages.

Picture 8.2 Producers meeting with the designer, costing new products

In interpreting the data on opportunities for new learning with FTP, it is important to remember that there are some women who do not feel they are achieving such benefits from Fair Trade production, and that such benefits are not uniform, but are generally highest amongst the jute handicraft workers who have the most active producer groups.

8.2.6 The importance of belonging to a group

It is very unusual for women in Bangladesh to be members of groups or to take part in group activities. The women were asked if they were members of any groups or organizations (Table 8.3), and 78% of FTP and 59% of OW did not belong to any groups. The only significant membership was to micro-finance groups and NGOs. This demonstrates that the norm, at least for women, is to have few if any relationships or social networks outside of the family. It is also an indication of how special belonging to a Fair Trade producer group can be, as it provides one of the few available social networks for women, which can be used to improved their wellbeing, and also their growing experience of 'power with' (Mosedale 2005).

Type of group	FTP	OW
Religious group	3	4
NGO group	34	38
Social group	5	0
Micro-finance group	22	75
Member of no group	219 (78%)	167 (59%)
Total	282	284

Table 8.3 Number of women belonging to groups

A consistent theme was the importance that the Fair Trade women placed on being a member of a group. The idea of a producer group is most strong with the jute and terracotta producers, though the women at production centres and HMP sites also felt a sense of being part of a group and meetings were held regularly with these producers. Fair Trade producers are not just individuals doing work (common in the commercial handicraft sector), but are linked to other women doing similar work. Studies of micro- finance have shown that the group experience can be very important to the members (Kabeer 2001, Mayoux 2005) and that practice in decision-making within the group "increased their individual leverage in decision making within the household" (Holvoet: 2005: 95). Research on women's groups associated with BRAC also found that the women valued the group experience, which lessened their isolation and contributed to changes in their attitudes, abilities, and relationships (Chen 1983: 139-188).

Involvement in a producer group can help with many of the disadvantages that home- based workers face. The group can make their work more visible, and helps to overcome problems of "powerlessness and fear of aggression from intermediaries" (Pearson 2004: 145). It provides a forum to discuss problems and a mechanism for entitlement to health and saving benefits (Craftfair Byelaws). As women's needs are often not met by formal labour organizations (Baruah 2004), SFTOs, such as Bithi and Craftfair, provide benefits and opportunities for learning through the group structure. However, it is well to recognise the many problems that poor people face in forming groups: a lack of assets such as education and social status, isolation, few rights and a lack of enforcement of rights, and social barriers within groups that exclude the poorest (Thorp, Steward 2005: 913-915). Thus, SFTOs need to be proactive in overcoming such barriers. For such groups to work well and to bring social benefits to individual producers they need to foster trust and the "norms of reciprocity" (Porter and Lyon 2006: 161), have committed, effective leaders and provide the possibility

of producers to take on positions of leadership within the groups. The qualitative data suggest that these three characteristics have been important aspects of the producer groups in this study.

The producer group, whether meeting in a courtyard or chatting informally while sewing together at a production centre, is a place where women can meet and converse (see Picture 8.3). This becomes an opportunity to move from the personal to the reflective, to voice with each other the "interplay between ascribed and lived identities" (Yeoh, Teo 2002: 8), where the ideals of purdah and the need to support their families are discussed, and moves into public places are managed while maintaining their 'honour'. Where village life is very restrictive for women in Bangladesh (Haque 2002: 50), the group can be an agent in itself, and provide support to the agency of individual women to overcome structural limitations placed on their mobility, access to education, and extensive behavioural codes of conduct. "Recognition of alternatives is the first step to overcoming fatalism" (Hartmann and Boyce 1983: 226), and the enthusiasm and possibilities of change were much more evident amongst the Fair Trade women.

Picture 8.3 Producer group in Tongi

As they negotiate new roles, their body language – voice, dress, movement, posture – and behaviour towards others changes, and is considered by Haque (2002) as an important indicator of empowerment. The Research Assistants, all of whom had had previous experience of interviewing women in Bangladesh, noticed such changes amongst the FTP suggesting that many Fair Trade women are achieving this 'indicator of empowerment' .

> I can tell when I come to a house of a Fair Trade woman, it seems neater and better, there is a better feeling around the place. (Shefali, Female Research Assistant, Madhupur)
>
> The Fair Trade women are often more chatty, they are willing to speak and look at me directly. (Shahed, Male Research Assistant, Kaliganj)
>
> The women in the Fair Trade group seem so confident. They are really confident. The other women are not so ready to talk, are often quite shy. (Nurul, Male Research Assistant, Muktagacha)

The group may provide the mechanism for change from individual to collective action, where they have a "common agenda" and the group provides a "source of affiliation and identity beyond those offered by family and traditional kinship structures" (Baruah 2004: 614). The practice of dowry is one such structure, and the practice of giving dowry came up in many conversations.

> My husband received 5,000 taka dowry when we married. We bought some land with it. (LH 13, Kaliganj, November 2005)
>
> My parents arranged marriage for me in my early years. But for dowry my husband abandoned me and I returned to my parents' house. (LH 20, Muktagacha, February 2007)

However, many women want to see change, are against dowry and are trying to take collective action. In this situation the producer group is providing support to individual women, trying to maintain a collective voice.

> We will not take dowry for our sons. There is pressure on us, but we resist it, we do not want to give dowry when our daughters marry. (Focus Group, Kallakair January 2005)

The women in the Monipur producer group said also, that they would not pay dowry for their daughters, and the group was an important element in their ability to stand up to societal norms (Section 7.4.1). However, while it often seems necessary to have a group as a vehicle for change, and for maintaining the changes that poor women want, a group does not

necessarily mean this will happen. As with all groups, some groups do not perform well, or at times, can be affected by conflict (LH 6, Madhupur). Secondly, while membership of a group, and "participation in more powerful social networks" often facilitates an increase in *roles* for women, the *relationships* between men and women often remain the same (Silvey 2003: 877). In the handicrafts I researched, most of the producers were women, on piece rates, but the managers were almost entirely salaried men. While the women in my study often expressed a wish for more paid work, they recognised that this work had to be managed so as not "to upset their husbands" (Focus Group, Monipur, January 2005), and that indeed they needed their husbands' cooperation in order to succeed.

> Our husbands are supportive and sometimes they help with the work, especially turning the raw jute into rope... it is twisted or braided, and we can then use it to make the hammock. (Focus Group, Kallakair January 2005)

When working well, being part of a Fair Trade producer group helps the women to learn new social skills and to have the opportunity to make new alliances and develop an additional network to complement family structures. This is particularly important in a society such as Bangladesh, and group membership may not be a useful criterion of empowerment in other societies. They begin to develop their own social capital, to be able to plan and work with others, an important asset, as "social capital is a major omitted variable in most studies of economic mobility" (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000: 17). However, the nature of social capital is gendered (Silvey 2003) and the operation of such skills and the social benefits are limited by the gendered use of power and the way in which social structures continue to limit what women can do. Women can only use their new Fair Trade networks in certain situations; to go to each other's houses, to go to meetings, and occasionally, some will go to Dhaka. They can meet with people connected to Fair Trade organizations, like my Research Assistants. But, they seldom engage in other social events or join in village activities, whereas men are free to travel, to socialise, to gather in groups, and to use their contacts to influence decisions. Group activities such as travelling to Dhaka with products, going to training meetings, or to a demonstration could only happen with the permission of male relatives.

Such producer groups do not necessary run smoothly, and it is a challenging job to support the groups, where women are learning new ways of relating. Inevitably, there are problems and conflicts that emerge. Field Staff identified two problems they were concerned about:

the issues of subcontracting (a private arrangement where a FTP gives her work to someone else) (Section 7.3.2), and women who want to stay in the group, but not do the work.

> If a group member has too much handicraft work to do, then she should share it with another group member. The second woman is not getting a fair wage. Also, when it comes to paying the welfare payment, it goes to our group member, but the woman who has done the work asks why she is not getting a welfare payment too, so this is not fair either. (Field Worker, SFTO, Dhaka, February 2007)

From the viewpoint of the individual women, it is understandable why she wants to keep her access to paid work, as well as helping out a poorer relative, but for the Fair Trade institution it can cause many problems.

> Some women do not work, they do not make the handicrafts. What they want is to be in the group and to get the social benefits, to attend meetings, to be part of the savings scheme... they want the benefits without the work. (Field Worker, SFTO, Dhaka, February 2007)

Again, it is understandable why individuals want to remain in a group that provides so many advantages. However, Fair Trade is about paid work, and cannot operate in this way. Thus the field workers, and those from SFTOs that support producer groups have to be very knowledgeable about the individual circumstance of the producers, and both diplomatic and strong individuals to continually manage such problems, and to negotiate the terrain between individual goals and institutional objectives.

8.2.7 Conclusion

This section has covered a number of important issues relating the experience of being a Fair Trade producer to changes in the lives of women in Bangladesh. Most women appear to want paid work and view Fair Trade employment as a good livelihood option. There are many benefits that they see as related to being a FTP, such as being treated with respect in the workplace, social learning that they are able to apply to other aspects of their lives, improving their handicraft skills, and being part of a new network of support. The role of the SFTO is crucial to these processes, and in addition to the good practice that has been identified, there are also signs of how wellbeing and empowerment for the individual producer can be improved by continuing to provide training in handicraft skills and learning in new areas, and being proactive in overcoming the difficulties in establishing and

maintaining groups. This section has also identified much continuity. The women never suggested or implied that they saw themselves as having independence outside of their family situation. While many relationships continue to be unequal, it does appear that involvement in Fair Trade production has had an affect on improving those relationships in that many (but not all) women see themselves as having more status and are gaining confidence and skill in negotiating those relationships.

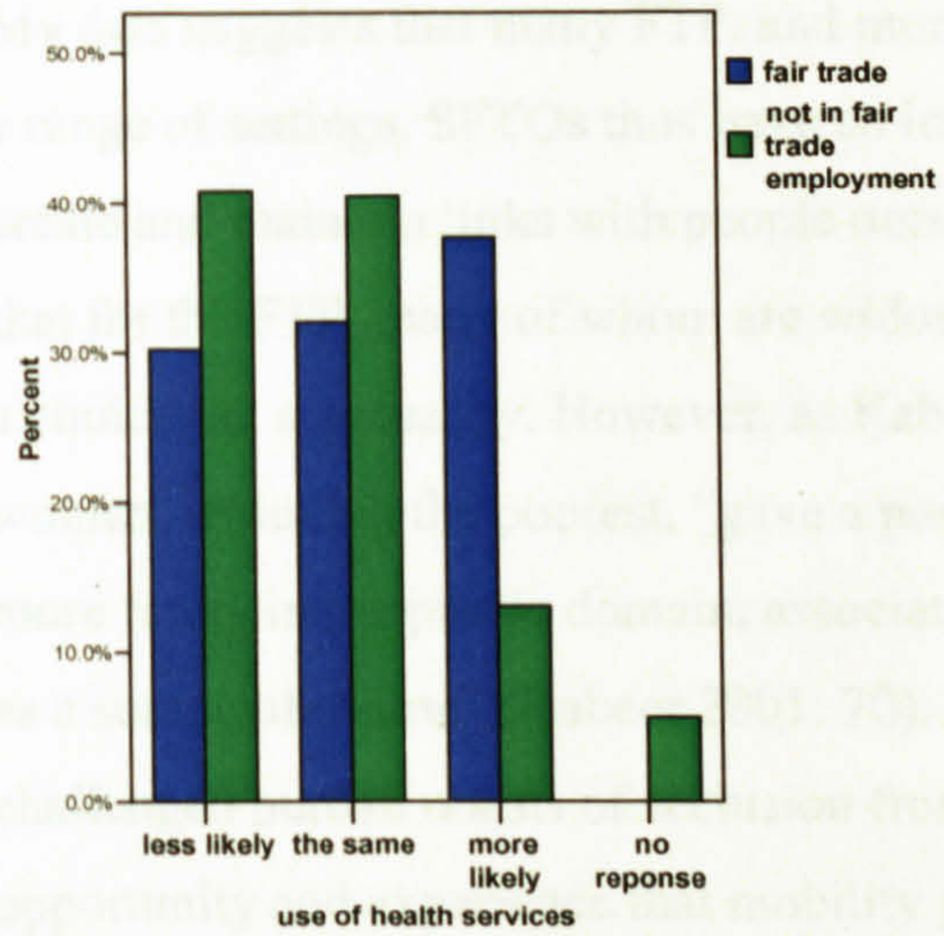
8.3 The social context: links to other institutions and organizations

This section considers the changing relationships between women and a range of institutions in Bangladesh, and how such changes may correlate with Fair Trade employment. The responses from FTP and OW are compared, to establish if there are significant differences between the two groups.

8.3.1 Increase in mobility and use of services

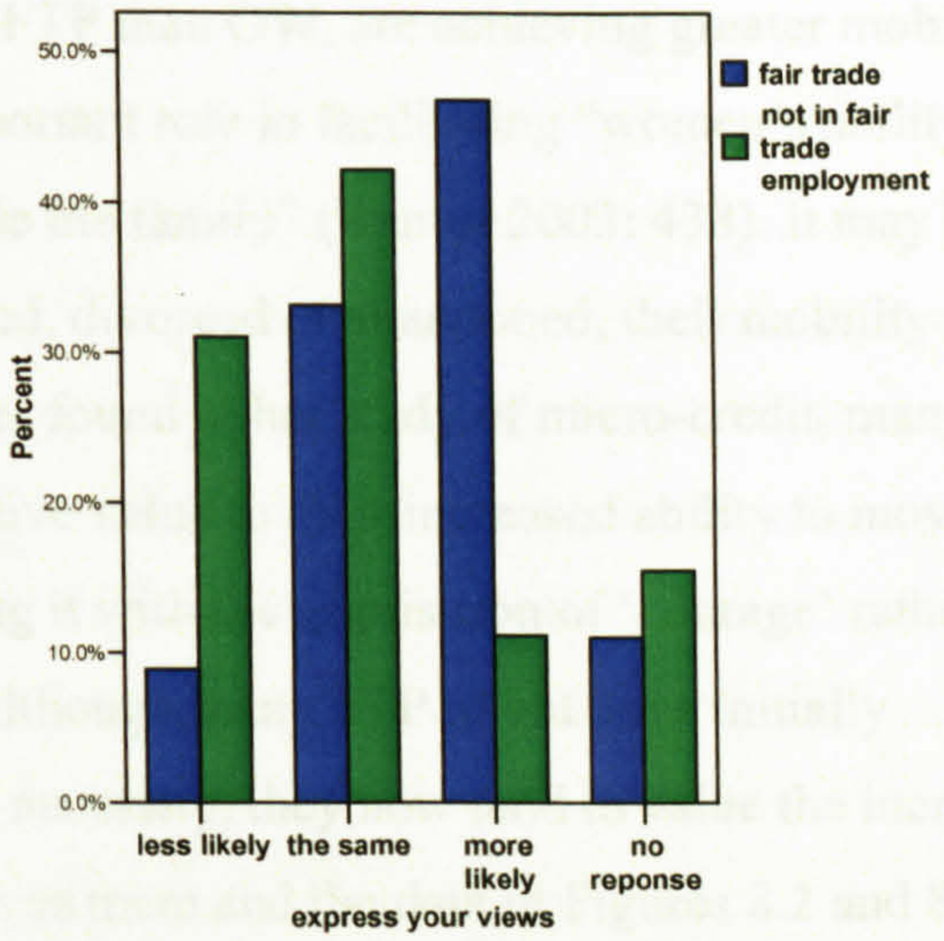
In order to assess whether women were experiencing change in other aspects of their lives, both Fair Trade producers (FTP) and the Other women (OW) were asked if they were more or less likely over the last five years to take part in six different activities.[47] The analysis showed that women involved in Fair Trade production were more likely to express positive change and sometimes by a significant amount.

[47] The women were asked about six situations. In two, use of health services and expressing their views, FTP did significantly better. In two others, going to market and visiting their own relatives they did better, but not by a large margin. In two situations, approaching government officials and taking part in village activities, most women did not respond to the question (Section 8.3.2).



Note: $\chi 2$ =38.277 df = 3 p<0.0005
Note: FTP=268 OW=267

Figure 8.2 Change in use of health services



Note: $\chi 2$ = 99.926 df = 3 p<0.0005
Note: FTP=280 OW=277

Figure 8.3 Change in expressing one's views

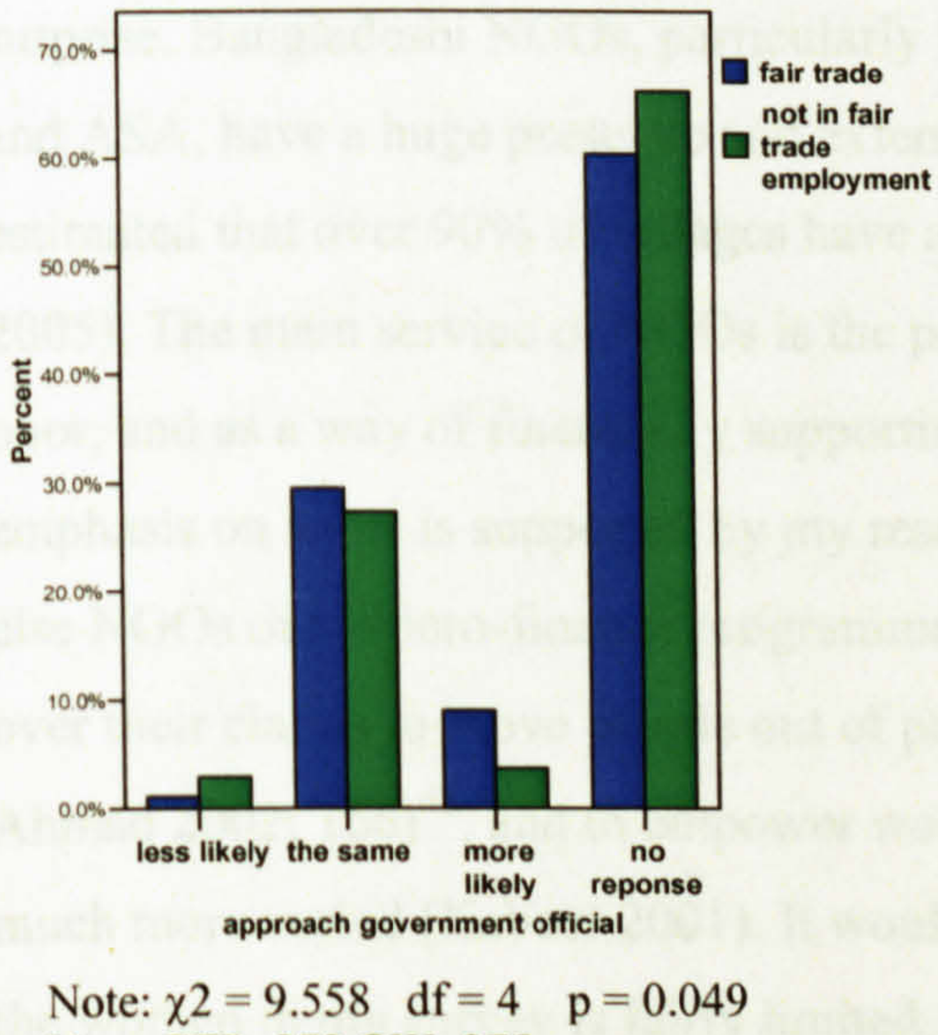
FTP were twice as likely to make use of health services now (Figure 8.2), and three times more likely to express their views now (Figure 8.3). In two situations involving increased mobility, going to market and visiting one's own relatives, the FTP were more likely to take part in these activities, but not by such a wide margin.

Many writers have used mobility as a proxy for an increase in women's empowerment in Bangladesh, where both increases in mobility and choice in exercising that mobility are considered. Sharif (2003) sees the restriction on the mobility of women as having a significant impact on their wellbeing, and through a range of indicators (including going to market and visiting relatives) she found that women involved with micro-credit organizations, supposedly improving their empowerment, still showed very few gains in terms of their mobility (Sharif 2003: 234-235). It is the poorest women who often have little choice but "to challenge the social norms of purdah (seclusion) regarding visits to the marketplace, traditionally an exclusively male domain" (Hunt and Kasynathan 2001: 47) and "the Bangladeshi women working in the garment factories, who need to travel daily to their work on public transport" are not really exercising choice, but doing the travel out of necessity.

My data suggests that many FTP, and more FTP than OW, are achieving greater mobility in a range of settings. SFTOs thus have an important role in facilitating "women's ability to create and maintain links with people outside the family" (Kantor 2003: 438). It may be that for the FTP, many of whom are widowed, divorced or abandoned, their mobility is not a choice but a necessity. However, as Kabeer found in her study of micro-credit, many woman, including the poorest, "gave a positive value to their increased ability to move more freely in the public domain, associating it with the acquisition of 'courage' rather than as a source of shame" (Kabeer 2001: 70). Although many FTP might have initially challenged purdah norms of seclusion from necessity, they now tend to value the increased opportunity and experience that mobility gives them and the data in Figures 8.2 and 8.3 is supported by many positive comments from focus groups and life histories

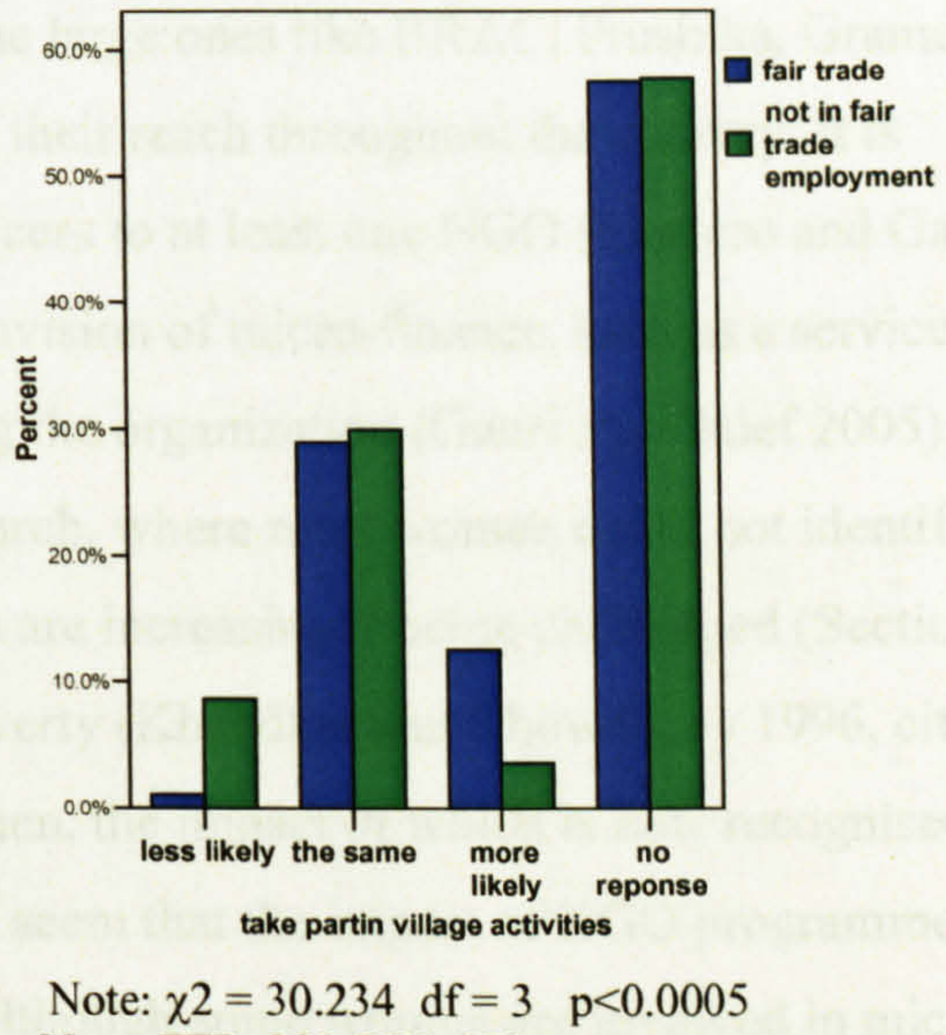
8.3.2 Situations of little change

While many women have gained new freedoms in some spheres, in other situations there has been little change. Two such situations are their involvement in village activities and approaching a government official (Figures 8.4 and 8.5).



Note: $\chi 2 = 9.558$ df = 4 p = 0.049

Note: FTP=278 OW=275



Note: $\chi 2 = 30.234$ df = 3 p<0.0005

Note: FTP=280 OW=270

Figure 8.4 Approaching a government official

Figure 8.5 Taking part in village activities

'No response' was the most common 'response', and there is little difference between the two groups. This suggests that these are activities that are outside the experience of most women, but they would be good indicators to use in the future to assess change over time.

8.3.3 Links to other agents of change

To find out the extent of contact with other agents of change, women were also asked to identify any services or benefits they received from NGOs. They reported little contact with NGOs, other than as a source for micro-finance (Table 8.4). Even in areas where an NGO was active and we were told they had a range of services (Patuakhali), the women did not appear to use them. In other areas (Kallakair, Kaliganj, Mymensingh) it was obvious that NGOs were active (signs, buildings, reports of NGOs), but again, both groups of women suggested that they had little if any knowledge or contact with such organizations

Services provided by NGOS	Number of women
Micro-finance	180
Education/health projects	22
Training/skills programmes	14
Other activities	10
No knowledge of services	345
Total number of respondents	562

Table 8.4 NGO services used by the women and their families

The NGO sector in Bangladesh is widespread and well-funded so these findings are a surprise. Bangladeshi NGOs, particularly the large ones like BRAC, Proshika, Grameen and ASA, have a huge presence and extend their reach throughout the country. It is estimated that over 90% of villages have access to at least one NGO (Fruttero and Gauri 2005). The main service of NGOs is the provision of micro-finance, both as a service to the poor, and as a way of financially supporting the organization (Gauri and Galef 2005). The emphasis on loans is supported by my research, where most women could not identify what else NGOs did. Micro-finance programmes are increasingly being challenged (Section 4.4) over their claims to move people out of poverty (Khandker and Chowdhury 1996, cited in Ahmad 2002: 166)[48], and to empower women, the impact of which is now recognised as much more varied (Kabeer 2001). It would seem that the impact of NGO programmes on the women in my survey is fairly limited, although some women are involved in micro-finance schemes run by NGOs (Table 7.6).

[48] Khandker and Chowdhury (1996) argue that on average it would take five years of micro-credit to move above the poverty line, and eight years to reach a point where loans were no longer necessary. However, many argue this has not happened (Montgomery, Bhattacharya et al 1996, Ahmad 2002).

The situation with the government, however, was quite different. Here, many of the women surveyed attributed positive change in their lives to new or improved services provided by the government, for example the provision of roads, schools and electricity. This is very interesting since Bangladesh is seen as a country with poor governance and people are generally very critical of the state and its activities. Yet, in these areas some of which are very remote, essential services are being delivered, if slowly and incompletely. Women were giving credit to the government for changes in their lives, though they were also quick to point out that the government should do more.

Services provided by government	Number of women
Improved roads	414
Electricity	293
School	213
Sanitation and water supply	123
Health clinics	106
Legislation/other	12
No recent services	39
Total number of respondents	506

Table 8.5 Knowledge of new or improved government services in the last five years

8.3.4 Wider changes – transport, communications and energy use

Improvements in transportation, communications, and the use of energy (some of which were supplied by government) have been very significant over the last five years (Table 8.6). Such changes have made a big difference in the everyday lives of women and are an important background to the more personal changes that may be experienced by FTP.

Change	Previous use	Change in last five years	No use or no change	Total number of respondents
Improved roads	16	479 (85%)	70	565
Use of electricity	38	326 (58%)	201	565
Travel on a bus	65	227 (40%)	273	565
Travel by rickshaw	128	191 (34%)	246	565
Use a Mobile phone	3	90 (16%)	469	562

Table 8.6 Changes occurring over the last five years, identified by the women

Differences in responses were largely related to geographical area, rather than whether a woman was a FTP or not. Increasingly, rural areas are being electrified. Roads were improved in some areas (Kaliganj, Kallakair) but dirt roads in Shariatpur and Patuakhali remained a cause for complaint. The terracotta group, faced with an overnight boat trip

from Dhaka to their villages and then travel down dirt roads, has particular problems with transporting their products.

> The transport is very difficult. There is a lot of wastage and breakages, which we have to cover... we have to go back and forth to Dhaka, there is wastage and then no pay. (Interview, Designer, Shariatpur, February 2005)

Grameen Telecom was established in 1997 and by 2003 there were an equal number of mobile phones and landlines in Bangladesh (Development, Issue 33, 2005: 38). Use of mobile phones was very limited, and only in Mymensingh and Badda/Tongi did some women say they had begun to use mobile phones. This again, would be a good indicator to assess change in the future, and to observe whether increasing numbers of women, and for what purposes, use the technology.

8.3.5 Change in the context of handicrafts and home-based work

Handmade paper is the only craft activity that takes place at a factory site. The jute, terracotta and embroidery workers would be considered 'home-based workers', a term often used for the many women who work in or around the home for cash (Pearson: 2004: 138-139), with the further distinction of being 'dependent workers' since they are paid a piece rate for their products. Home-based workers share particular problems because they and their work are often hidden (Kabeer and Mahmud 2004: 94), they do not have access to the benefits of employees, and tend to be powerless and with little knowledge to negotiate individually with the person giving them the work (Pearson 2004: 145). The Fair Trade organizations do mediate some of these problems: their invisibility is less because they are part of a group, and also they often receive additional benefits, though this is associated with the philosophy and economic viability of the SFTO.

Handicraft production does not challenge traditional ideas about work – it is seen as a female occupation, and does not threaten male employment opportunities, and this coupled with the rules of seclusion, "condition women's choices" (Amin 1997: 232). There appears to be little movement from handicraft production to better paid jobs, and many of the producers would like their daughters, daughters-in-law, or nieces to join the groups. This could be a reflection of the limited alternatives, but also the conservative nature of home-based work. Because it can be done from home, thus maintaining many norms of purdah,

and does not threaten men, handicraft production is also a favoured income generation activity of NGOs in Bangladesh[49]. It is very hard to find estimates of the number of people involved in home-based handicraft activity. ECOTA suggested 400,000 in their Baseline survey (1998), though another source estimates 1 million people involved in home-based handloom production (Shamim 2005, cited in ECOTA 2005: 26). A recent study of rural women's livelihoods found that part-time work at home was seen as a good livelihood option (see Table 8.7)

Domestic labour, earth works, food for work	Agricultural labour on other people's land	Garment work or other factory work	Work inside the home, small enterprises, part time employment	Professional jobs, health worker, NGO worker
"Survival"	"To get by"	"To make a better life"	"Paid work on selective terms - to live nicely"	"A good job"
BAD WORK				**GOOD WORK**

Source: Gibson, Mahmud et al (2004), Figure 2

Table 8.7 Women's perceptions of paid work

The production of handicrafts, for own use and for sale, has been an important part of rural economies over many centuries, but it is seldom that craft production has led to self-sufficiency (Grimes and Miligram 2000: 3). It has always been a hard and precarious life (Scrase 2003). The exploitative nature of handicraft production is based on both gender and class distinctions; working from home keeps women in low status, repetitive work.

> .... craft production is an important industry for the employment of women. Significantly though, the final stage of the process – selling of the finished goods – remains an inherently masculine task.... Comparative inter-country research reveals conclusively that women lack control over the distribution and marketing of crafts, exacerbating their inequality within the industry. (Scrase 2003: 451)

While Fair Trade producers are making real gains and improvements to their wellbeing, it must be remembered that this is in the context of home-based handicraft production. Although their personal status may have grown as a result of being able to contribute to the household income, the meaning of women's work, retains an "inferior, secondary and temporary status" and "the challenge posed to gender identities is contained" (Salway, Jesmin et al 2005: 344). Except for middle-class families, social norms continue to prevent

[49] Of the more than 700 NGOs registered with the Women's Affairs Department, 91% were found to be involved in handicraft programmes (Haque 2002: 43).

women from having vocational training or employment in public spaces. Instead, girls tend to receive minimal education, early marriage, and skills that are seen as an extension of home-based activity (Sharif: 2003: 224). Women should be able to expand their roles *within* the industry, so as to lessen their inherently unequal position, for example into design, management, or marketing, and Craftfair is facilitating this process for some of their most experienced producers (Meeting, Education Officer, Dhaka, February 2007). An additional step to improve the empowerment of women through Fair Trade would be to give women the choice of vocational training. FTOs could also be proactive, as some of the best are doing now, in providing Trade Union services to craft producers, making sure that the potential for exploitation of their cheap and available labour is restricted and efforts are always made to improve the working conditions and remuneration for their labour.

8.3.6 Change and the social context of Fair Trade production

This section has discussed some of the wider changes that are experienced by women in Bangladesh. Many of the FTP have increased their use of services and their mobility, and appreciate the change this has made to their lives. Few of the women in my research appear to have contact with NGOs (except for micro-finance loans), though services provided by government (Table 8.5) have been very significant in improving the lives of many women. While home-based handicraft production has given new opportunities to many women to earn an income and to have new experiences, such change is constrained by staying within traditional norms that often disadvantage women because of, in part, the low status of handicraft work. FTOs have a role in challenging the disadvantages experienced by handicraft producers, and in creating opportunities for producers to move into staff, management or salaried positions when appropriate.

8.4 Women having a voice and being heard

Involvement in decision making is seen as a key indicator of women's empowerment (Kabeer 2001), echoed in both development literature and micro-finance, though it can only be assessed within a particular social and cultural context (Pearson 1996). Sharif sees "the extent to which women are empowered to make decisions regarding matters that affect their families as well as themselves" (Sharif 2003: 233) as crucial to the process of empowerment. Evaluations by Holvoet suggest that while women could have influence in the use of the loan, this often did not translate into wider involvement in decision-making

(Holvoet 2005: 97). Thus, it would be interesting to see if Fair Trade employment, which combines income with access to loans and group support, provides a better path to women's "increased voice in household decision making" (Kabeer 2001: 72). In order to explore whether Fair Trade women have more opportunities for 'voice and being heard', I will consider their involvement in decision-making within the family, examples of collective action, and finally, their aspirations for the future and their ability to achieve those aspirations.

8.4.1 Involvement in decisions

When asked whether they felt they were more involved in family decisions as a result of having an income, the majority of both FTP and women in other paid work replied that they had, though Fair Trade women were significantly more likely to be involved (Table 8.8). Only 6% of FTP felt there had been no change in their involvement in decision making in the home, while 44% of the Other Women with paid work felt having paid work had made no difference. 'No difference' is likely to mean no or very little involvement in decisions as this is the cultural norm. This suggests that there is something that improves the possibilities of Fair Trade producers being involved in decision-making relative to other types of paid work, which is likely to be related to the benefits identified in Table 8.2.

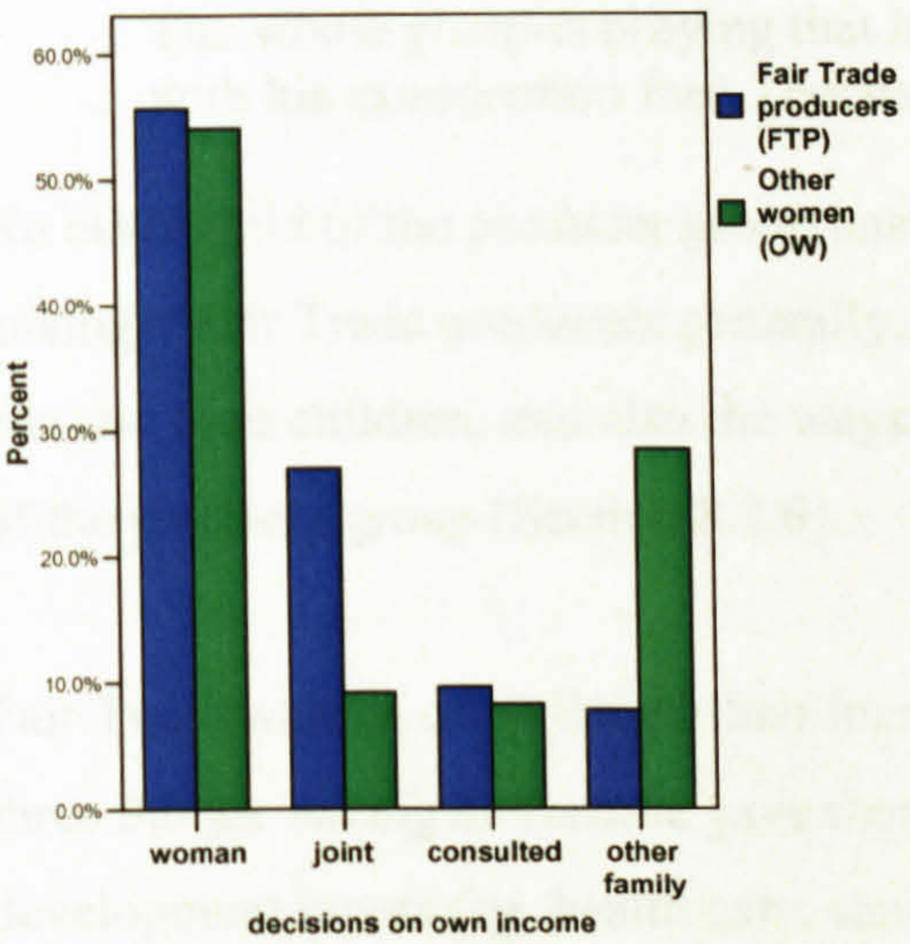
	FTP number	FTP percentage	OW number	OW percentage
More involved	266	94%	61	56%
No difference	16	6%	47	44%
Total	282	100%	108	100%

Table 8.8 Involvement in decisions as a result of having paid work

Questions were asked about decision-making in a number of different situations[50], and also at different levels of involvement: decisions made by one person, consultation, and joint decisions. It is the cultural norm for men to make all the household decisions (Kabeer 1997, un Nabi et al 1999), including how any income is spent, who and how long children stay at school, and the selection of marriage partners. However, being more involved in decisions,

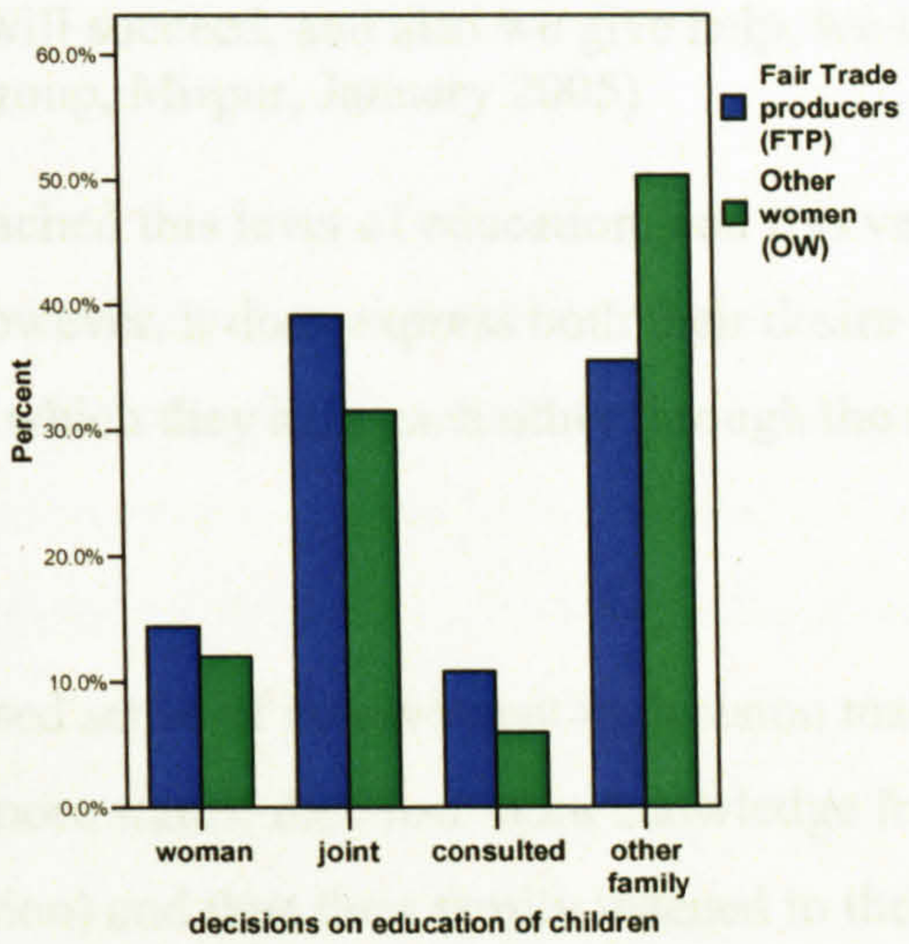
[50] There were seven different types of decisions. Three of them, decisions about income, small family purchases, and the education of children, showed that FTP had more involvement than the OW. In two of the areas, marriage of children and village problems, most women were not involved. In two types of decisions, buying of land and crops to plant, very few gave a response, which contradicts the qualitative data, since many FTP talked about both buying land and growing crops.

and having their husbands listen to their opinions was the kind of 'good change' that many women wanted. Generally women who participate in Fair Trade production are more involved in decision-making than other women, including those who have other paid employment.



Note: χ^2=36.181 df = 3 p<0.0005
Note: FTP=282 OW=108
108 is the total number of OW with paid work

Figure 8.6 Involvement in decisions on own income



Note: χ^2 =13.747 df = 3 p = 0.003
Note: FTP =278 OW =282

Figure 8.7 Involvement in decisions about education of children

Decisions in relation to their own income was discussed in Section 7.2.4, where it was found that women spent their income on basic expenditure such as food, clothing, school expenses and household items (Table 7.3). It was also extremely important for many women to be able to use their income to buy land, or to buy tree saplings, plants or animals (Focus Groups, January 2005). For women to have the resources, and the ability to be involved in such decisions and to acquire assets, is a relatively new situation in Bangladesh, and for many women, husbands, fathers and sons continue to make most of the family decisions.

The ability to educate their children was an important goal identified by women. FTP are more likely to be involved in decisions about the education of their children than OW (Figure 8.7). There is little reliable data on educational attainment, retention and transition rates (Hunt and Kasynathan 2001:46). The education they receive is often quite poor, especially in rural areas (Discussion, Field workers, Kallakair, January 2005), and even

with an education there may not be adequate job opportunities, particularly in rural areas. Still, Fair Trade producers feel particularly strongly about educating their children.

> ..... was deserted by her husband 16 years ago. He was mad. One daughter died and one daughter is married. Her son is very bright and is trying for University. The whole group is praying that he will succeed, and also we give help, we help with his examination fees. (Focus Group, Mirpur, January 2005)

No other child of the producer group has reached this level of education, and it is very rare amongst Fair Trade producers generally. However, it does express both their desire to educate their children, and also the ways in which they help each other through the medium of the producer group (Section 8.2.6).

Fair Trade woman often linked their increased sense of involvement in decision making to three things: having an income gave them more status; they had more knowledge from the development inputs (eg. health care, sanitation) and thus their family listened to them more; and finally, they could discuss ideas with each other in the producer groups, or at work places, and through this gained experience on how to express themselves.

> Our husbands now talk to us, not only about family decisions, but also other social problems and things going on in the community. (Focus Group, Kaliganj, January 2005)

> Craftfair (Fair Trade) carries many meanings for us. Women have become aware, and they have learnt the ability to speak out. (LH 14, Kallakair, November 2005)

The importance of being involved in decisions and the role played by the producer group was made by one of the staff working in Craftfair. When asked, "What do you think the women in the villages want?" she replied:

> They want to change their lifestyle, to improve their families, but there are many barriers. With the group they get support, they can share and be more aware of their rights. The woman needs to get out of the house, then she can begin to know and understand. The women want an income, because their husband's income is not enough and society makes pressure on them. But, they also want to make decisions about how to use the income, to say how it is spent. Before, they would hand over the money to their husbands or children, but now they are wanting a say. It takes time. All over the world this is happening. The women know this from the media. They want change, but it will take time. (Interview 1, Education Manager, SFTO, Dhaka, December 2005)

Thus, it is likely that the higher level of involvement in decision-making of Fair Trade producers is a result of several inter-linking processes. First, as members of a group the women are encouraged to take part in development activities, and secondly the respect they gain from staff of SFTOs gives them confidence to assert their ideas. Their growing ability to negotiate public spaces and services, activities which are useful to the family, also probably gives them increased status.

Two areas in which women have little involvement and which are usually the responsibility of other family members are decisions related to the marriage of children and village problems. On both issues roughly three-quarters of the women, both FTP and OW were not involved in such decisions (Table 8.9). These would be good indicators for future research.

Marriage of children	**Woman involved**	**Other family members**	**Total number**
FTP	76 27%	201 73%	277 100%
OW	69 24%	213 76%	282 100%
Village problems			
FTP	65 24%	209 76%	274 100%
OW	50 18%	232 82%	282 100%

Table 8.9 Involvement in decisions about marriage of children and village problems

8.4.2 Individual to collective action

The transition from individual wellbeing and improvements in one's own household to collective action around common concerns is only just beginning in Bangladesh, at least in terms of women's actions. Most of the women did not want to discuss politics and generally did not suggest that they had a role to play in either local or national issues. This could be an area that will develop more in the future. However, some of the FTP, particularly from older Craftfair groups, spoke about taking part in public demonstrations and marches, for example one in Dhaka on women's rights.

> ...the women now take part in national and international meetings and events, such as International Women's Day.... they now vote and are active in elections. (Discussion, Education Officer, Mirpur, January 2005)

The women said they would not have attempted such activity without first being a member of the producer group (Research Diary, 6 January 2005). Such activity was a new experience for them, and one that is unusual for women in Bangladesh.

> ....one needs to situate the notion of empowerment within a historical and geographical context. In Bangladesh, where cultural norms of female seclusion have kept most women from the public arena in the past, women's rallies – even if organised by NGOs – are definitely radical gestures of change." (Haque 2002: 56)

This type of collective action was not apparent in the terracotta producers, based on a family enterprise, or in many of the embroidery or handmade paper producers, reflecting the more conservative nature of the SFTO, which does not get involved in campaigning issues. Thus it is not just being involved in Fair Trade production that is significant, but also the nature of the SFTO and whether it facilitates collective action. Another important criterion for group action appears to be how long women have been members of the group, where older, more stable groups with supportive relationships between the women are able to engage in this new and radical step in the context of Bangladesh.

8.4.3Aspirations for the future

All the women in the survey were asked about their hopes for the future. This was an important topic to learn about, because it helps us to understand the kind of change that is important to them. Many of the previous indicators and discussion are focused on the ability to achieve such goals, and if being part of Fair Trade production facilitates such achievements. The women were free to give as many or as few aspirations as they wished. The aspirations for the respondents were generally consistent between both groups of women and across the eight field areas, demonstrating the similarities between women in terms of what they deem as important.[51] Their aspirations centre on their families' welfare and improved chances for their children (Table 8.10).

[51] There was no statistical significance in the differences between the two groups in terms of aspirations, though there is in their perceived ability to achieve these aspirations, particularly in their ability to have enough food, to educate sons, and to find work for sons ($P < 0.0005$ to 0.001).

Aspirations	FTP can achieve	FTP may be able to achieve	FTP Aare unlikely to achieve	OW can achieve	OW may be able to achieve	OW are unlikely to achieve
Have adequate food	172	25	0	143	59	0
Help relatives	26	35	4	12	18	0
Educate sons	108	57	1	70	88	3
Educate daughters	74	49	1	48	62	4
Sons have paid work	52	75	2	23	92	5
Daughters have paid work	17	41	4	17	36	2
Daughters good marriage	30	46	1	19	47	0
Buy land	44	59	8	34	68	13
Improve house	21	78	3	15	106	12
Buy another house	13	42	12	7	32	14
Start a business	5	7	3	2	6	4
Improve self, education	14	13	0	3	9	0
Have a good marriage	10	4	0	2	1	0

Note: FTP=282 OW=284

Table 8.10 Aspirations for the future with perceived ability to achieve their hopes for the future

Their hopes for their children are also reflected in the life histories:

> My main achievement is that I was able to educate both of my children... my daughter has her SSC, my son his HSC...(LH 1, Tongi, April 2005)

> I would love to see my kids and in-laws have a good life. I don't want them to encounter hardship which I have faced in my own life. I want them to be able to maintain a good family atmosphere. (LH 15, Kallakair, November 2005)

However, where there is a difference between the two groups of women is in their assessment of their ability to achieve their hopes for the future. Here, the Fair Trade producers (FTP) are more likely to say that they can achieve their aspirations (columns one and four) than the Other Women (OW), who are less confident in their ability to achieve their hopes for the future. This assessment would include a whole range of factors: that they have an income, that they and other important earners are healthy, and perhaps, most importantly, that they have had the opportunity to learn 'new things' and thus to think that improvements and change are possible (see Picture 8.4).

Picture 8.4 Making progress, Badda

One group that was different from the norm are some of the younger girls, many unmarried, who work at the Badda production Centre (Table 8.10. bottom two rows). With this group there was a sense of their own futures and they were eager to discuss their own education, marriage, or plans to obtain a good job. They were generally more vivacious and talkative than other respondents.

> I do my courses in the morning, from 9:00 to 1:00, and do handicraft work in the afternoon. Bithi is not concerned, they allow this, I can come and go. I also do paid tuition work. As I am single, the income goes to my family. My father does not work. We have to rent out some of our house so we have some income…. I want to complete my education. My relatives are not happy – they are jealous about my study and that I have an income. I want to work for an NGO, or possibly in a company." (LH 3, Badda, March 2005)

They could not be said to have achieved much empowerment: they were often young and living with their families. However both they, and the smaller group of young OW with similar hopes, also living in urban areas, felt that they would be able to achieve their goals.

8.5 Conclusion: Fair Trade production and empowerment

The chapter started with a definition of empowerment that emphasized achieving improvements in absolute and relative welfare, having meaningful choices and the ability (agency) to make choices (Mahmud 2002). My data suggests that many (but not all) FTP have made significant gains in their absolute welfare, with some changes to their relative position towards men and other powerful groups. Fair Trade production provides some additional choices for them, though it is very difficult to assess the level of agency, since most women appear to do as their family wishes, and not enough is known about the changes in social relationships which mediate the possibilities that are open to women. The process of empowerment is not inevitable or linear, and is not necessarily a part of Fair Trade production, but is more likely to occur in that context.

Having an income is the key variable in terms of achieving the kinds of change that women seek, in particular contributing to the economic wellbeing of the household. Other gains, such as status, confidence and new skills were mainly a result of being able to earn their own income. Kantor in her study of home-based workers in India found a similar response. While having an income did not directly affect empowerment outcomes, it did "have an indirect effect on empowerment outcomes by mediating some of the negative effects of social norms" (Kantor 2003: 436).

Women have also made gains in applying the knowledge and new experiences achieved through participation in Fair Trade networks to other aspects of their lives. The data shows that they have made some increases in mobility, taken advantage of services, are more involved in family decisions, and some are even taking part in collective activities. Being part of a producer group has extended the social network of many women, and most now feel confident enough to articulate their hopes for the future and to feel that they can achieve them. Many of these experiences could be having an impact on their ability to use power in different ways (Rowlands 1997) and in different situations (Table 8.11), thus contributing to their empowerment.

POWER WITHIN	POWER TO	POWER WITH
Confidence	Handicraft skills	Social skills
Status increased	Some business skills	New group networks
Rank in village improves	Increase in mobility	Contact with SFTO staff
More respect	Maintaining literacy	
New knowledge		
Self esteem		

Table 8.11 Changes identified by Fair Trade producers linked to increases in forms of power

These processes suggest that many FTP are making some progress in "gaining independence and control over their lives" (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 38-40). Although social networks provided through Fair Trade help women to discuss and solve problems together, there is less progress on "shifts in local patronage" (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 38-40) due to the limited involvement of Bangladeshi women in the public sphere.

Many of the additional benefits, such as being treated with respect, meeting new people, or the provision of savings schemes, relate to the particular philosophies and ways of working of the SFTOs (Chapters 5 and 6). The institutional practices of Fair Trade production appear to have significant influence on the practical needs of women (Moser 1989). However, because of the limitations faced by SFTOs, including conservative cultural norms and financial constraints, attention to strategic needs has been more limited (Table 8.12).

PRACTICAL NEEDS	STRATEGIC NEEDS	LIMITATIONS
Fair income	Information on rights	Home based work
Handicraft skill	Some collective action	Low status of handicrafts
Social skills		Work in women's 'leisure' time
Child care		Does not challenge gender roles
Security		
Good working conditions		
Savings schemes		

Table 8.12 Applying characteristics of Fair Trade handicraft production to practical and strategic needs

However, many continuities remain, especially in regard to the relationships between women and men where "the mutually reinforcing effect of the inequalities within the family, and those within the wider society" (Salway, Jesmin et al 2005: 344) are still dominant. Women often do not have a choice to be independent, nor do many wish this (El-Solh and Mabro 1994), seeing their wellbeing as "intimately bound up" with the wellbeing of the family (Salway, Jesmin et al 2005: 345). The data from my research indicate that

most FTP feel they are achieving economic and social gains, but such gains need to be negotiated: they have more work to do, their husbands must agree and not get upset, and when in pubic spaces they are often uncomfortable. Both purdah (female seclusion) and the inevitability of persistent poverty are changing (Siddiqi 1998), and women are creating new roles for themselves and renegotiating essentialist cultural views of their place in the family and in society. Writing in another context (Mexico), the observation is equally true of Fair Trade producers in Bangladesh, where "The power to do new things, and pride in what they can do, are a liberation for these women" (Townsend et al 1999: 33). It is important to acknowledge the gains that many women have made and the fact that they both want and appreciate many of the changes that Fair Trade production has helped them to achieve.

Chapter 9 Different places, different stories

> Before the future was dark, now the future is light... we know more and we have skills. We can discuss with our husbands and with each other, and we have ideas on how to solve problems. (Producer, Focus Group, Monipur, January 2005)

9. 1 Introduction

The organizations of Fair Trade were discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 in terms of meanings and institutional practices both between SFTOs and NFTOs, and SFTOs and their producers. Chapters 7 and 8 analysed in more depth the impact of Fair Trade on producers, primarily taking a comparative approach between Fair Trade producers and other similar women in the same villages. This chapter will compare the impact of Fair Trade *between* different groups of producers, comparing them to each other. Why do some groups of producers appear to have greater success in reducing family poverty (Chapter 7), and achieving some social benefits for themselves (Chapter 8)? In some aspects the similarities between the FTP and OW in a geographical area were greater than the similarities with those producers and other groups of Fair Trade producers (FTP). The themes identified in this chapter were derived through inductive data analysis. Moving on from the general proposition – that as a group FTP do better than the group of OW – this chapter considers the geographical, social and cultural context influencing the achievement of the developmental goals of Fair Trade.

9.1.1 The variables

Through the research process a number of issues were identified as being of particular importance to Fair Trade handicraft production in Bangladesh. It is not the intention to generalise about these issues, although it is likely that some have an impact to varying degrees for other products and in other countries. This chapter will discuss six factors which emerged as having a significant impact, and are used to illustrate the main argument of the chapter, namely, that geography, the place and culture of production, has an impact on how production is organised and how, and to what extent, development goals are achieved. The six issues are:

- The philosophy and practices of the SFTO
- The activities and nature of the producer group
- The length of involvement in Fair Trade

- The religious and cultural context
- The rural or urban location of production areas
- The commercial viability of the SFTO

9.1.2 The indicators

A range of sources and indicators will be cited in order to assess the influence of the six variables. In addition, I have selected four proxy indicators of 'good change' to enable comparison to be made across the eight field areas.

- Use of medical services (Figures 9.1 and 9.2)

In the last five years, are you more or less likely to use health services?

- Confidence to express one's views (Figures 9.3 and 9.4)

In the last five years are you more or less likely to express your views?

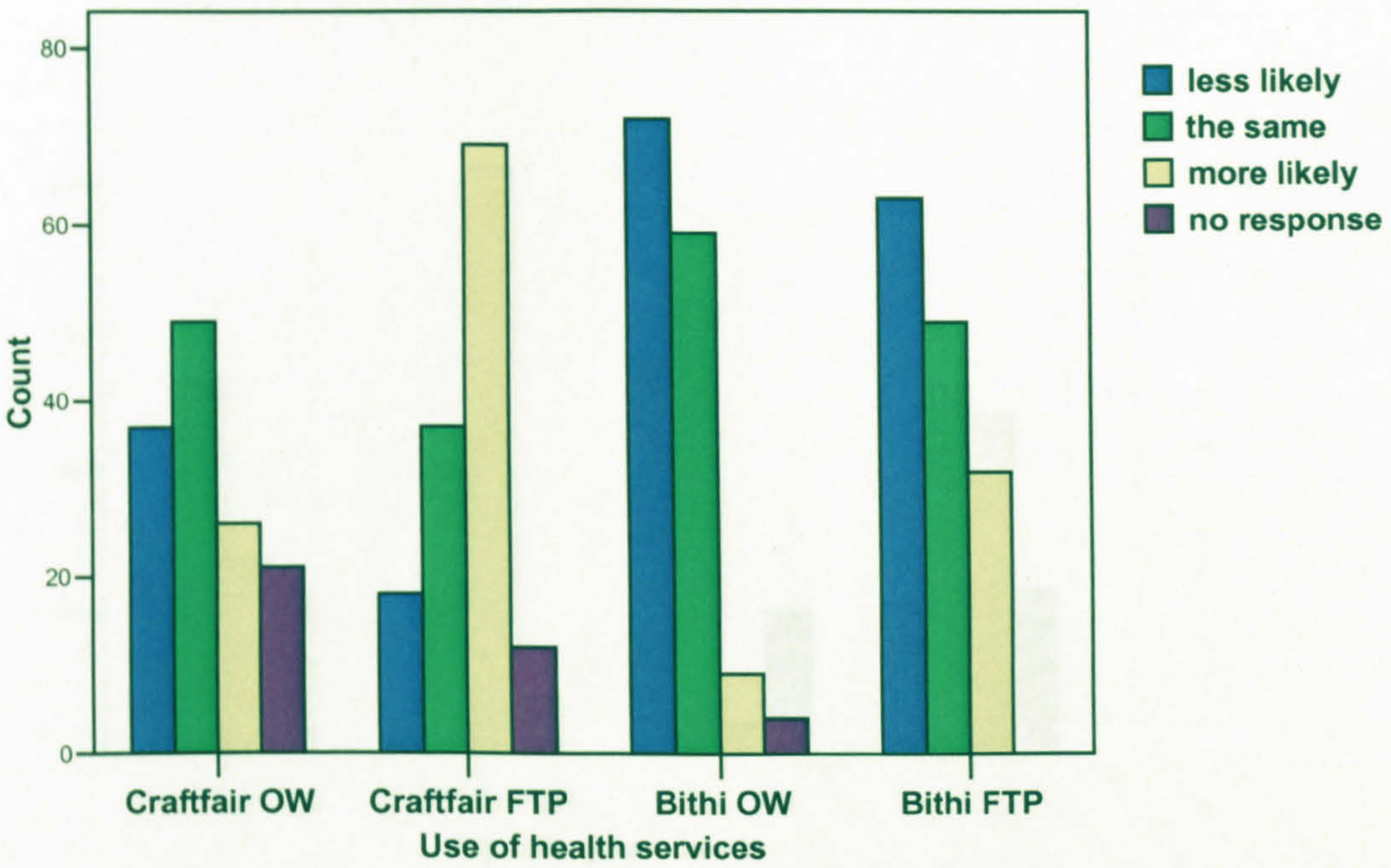
- Perception of rank in the village/town (Figure 9.5)

How would you rank your family in terms of the rest of the village?

- Perception of change in status (Figure 9.6)

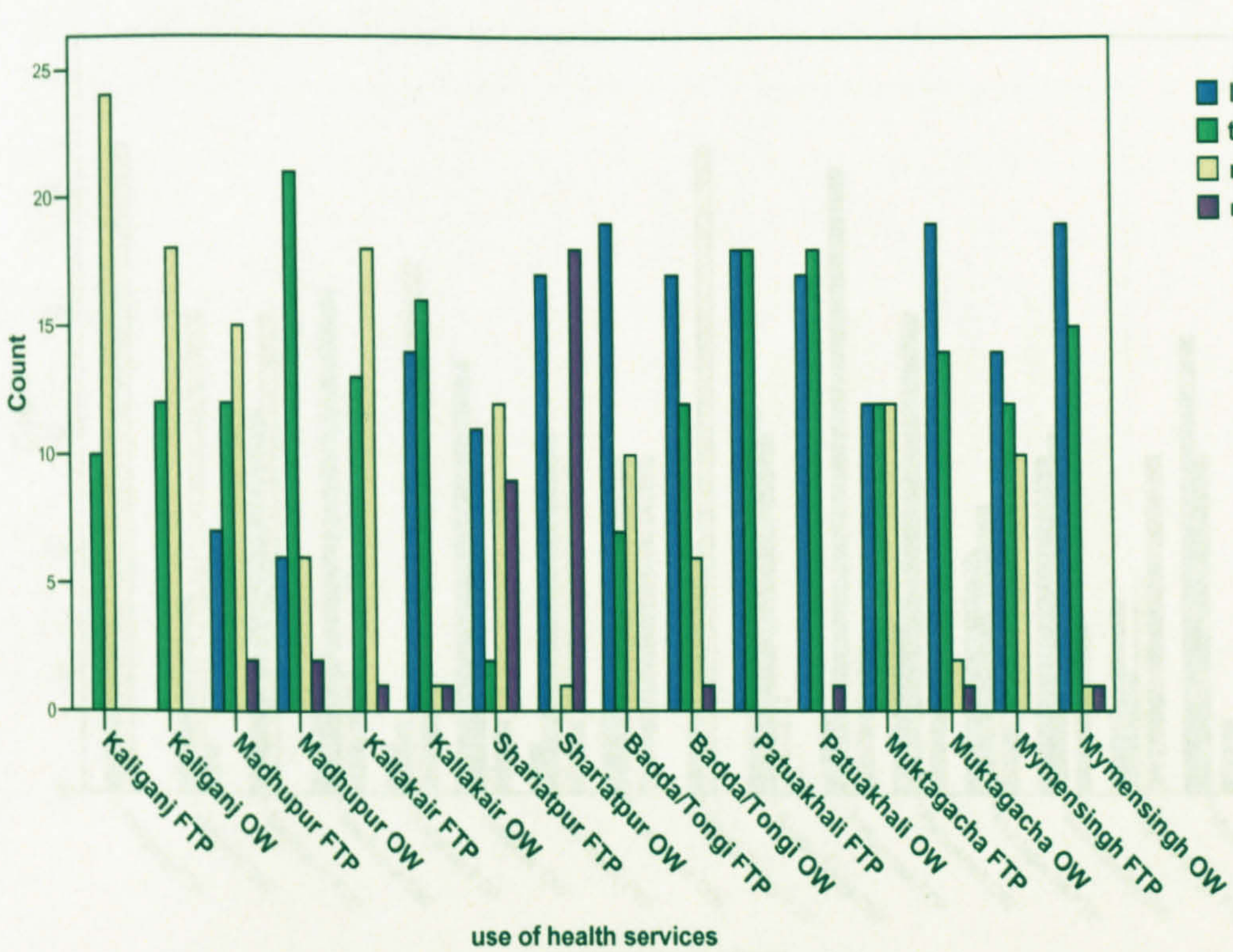
Has there been a change in the status of your household relative to the rest of the village over the last five years?

I have selected 'use of medical services' and 'expressing one's views' because these are two changes which many women said they would like to see, and because 'more likely' answers would include a range of positive effects: economic benefits (having the income to pay for medicines and services), a growing sense of self-worth, increased mobility, and the ability to manage changes in relationships. A perceived change in rank is significant because many of the producers are from the most disadvantaged and poorest sections of society (landless, divorced, deserted), thus starting at the lowest rank, and improving their position within the village/town would show that they feel they are making progress, even if the context is still of widespread poverty when considered on an objective scale, e.g. against an international poverty line. Finally, a change in personal status would include judgements about material wellbeing and improvements in their social status because of greater confidence, increased knowledge, and no longer being seen as a burden to their families. Alternatively, 'less likely' or 'the same' responses suggest that the women are not achieving the kinds of change they would like to see in their lives.



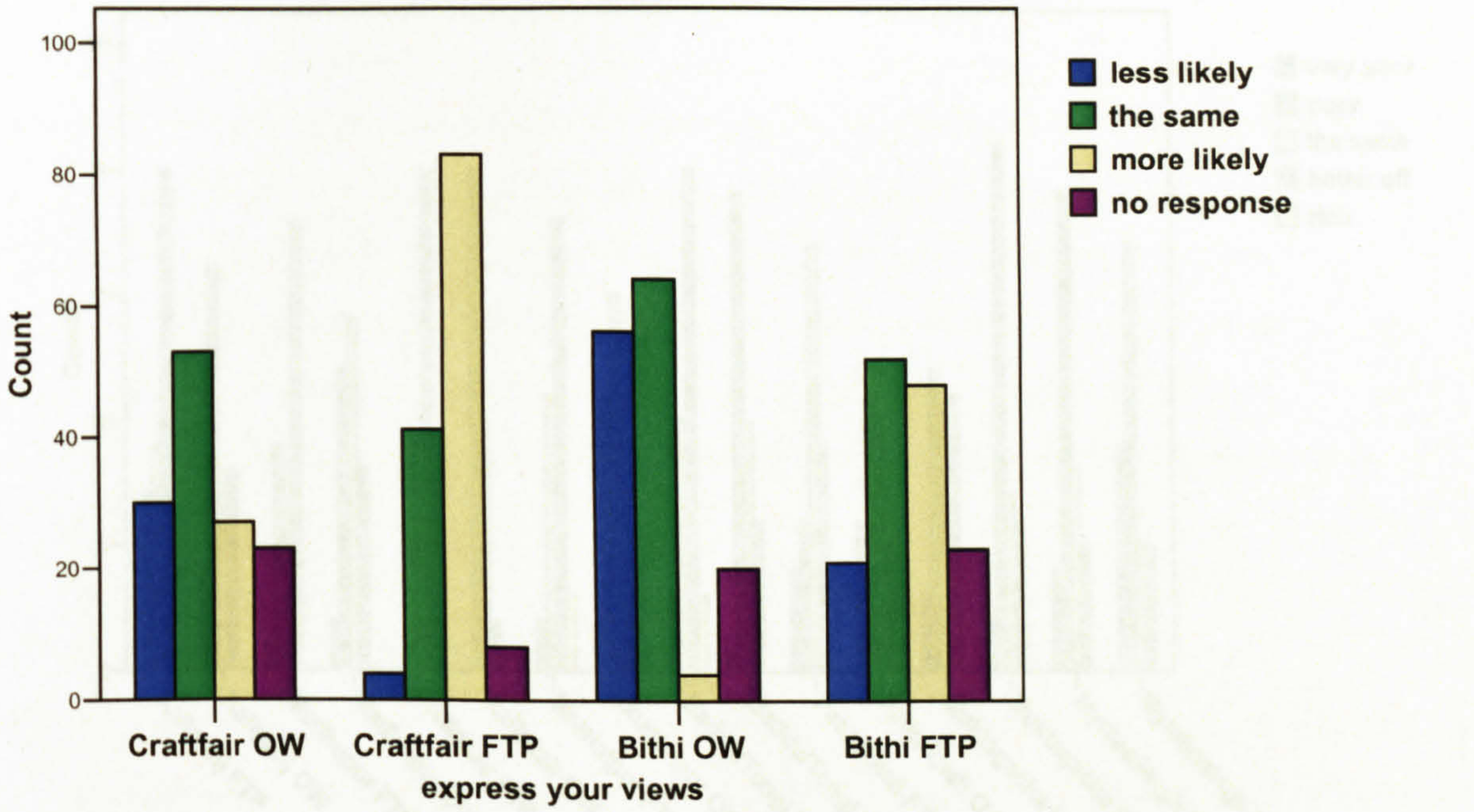
Note: $\chi^2 = 127.657$ df = 9 $p < 0.0005$ FTP=268 OW=267

Figure 9.1 Responses to the question, 'In the last five years, are you more or less likely to use health services?' Comparison of Craftfair and Bithi areas



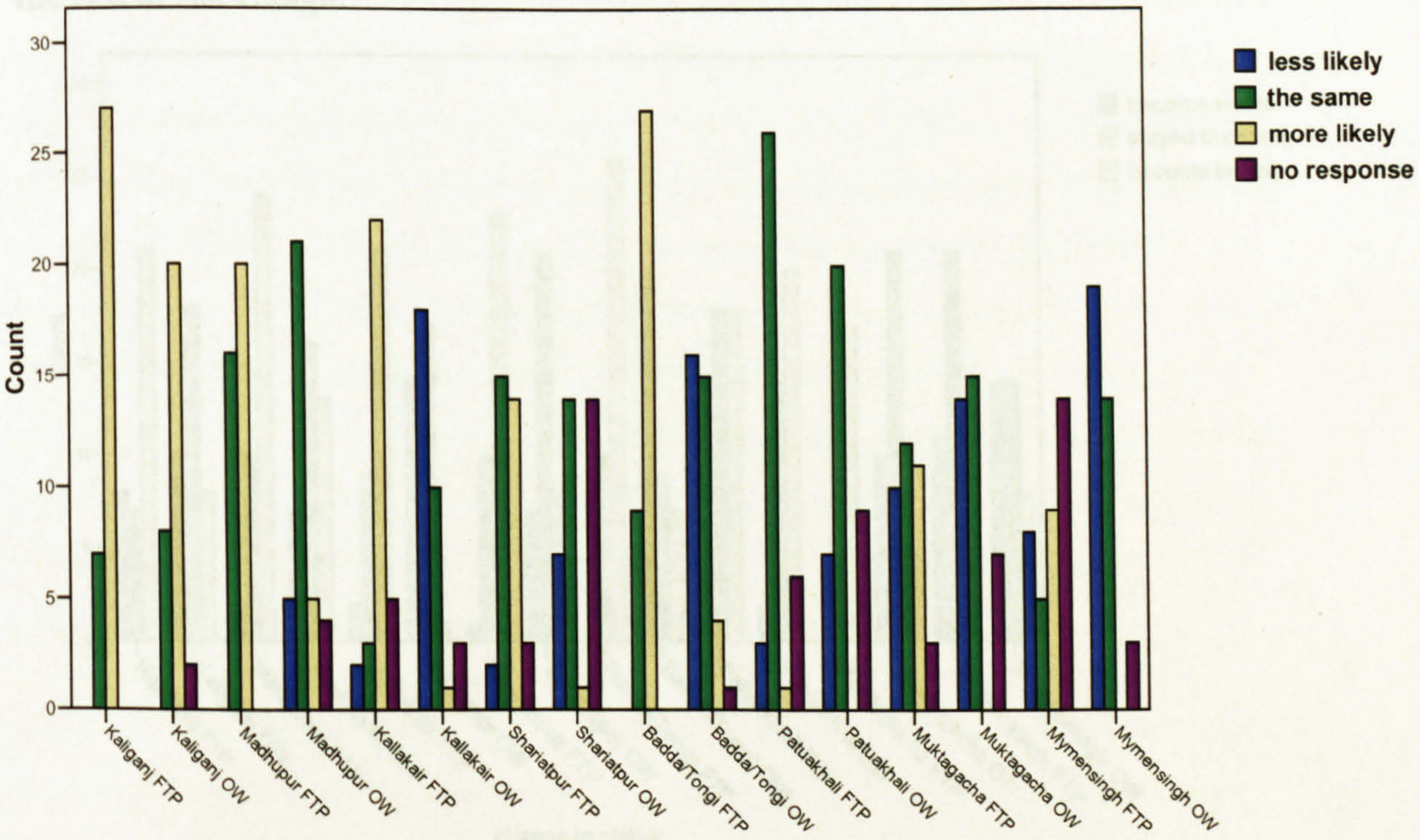
Note: $\chi^2 = 346.874$ df = 45 $p < 0.0005$ FTP=268 OW=267

Figure 9.2 Responses to the question, 'In the last five years are you more or less likely to use health services?' Comparison of the eight producer areas



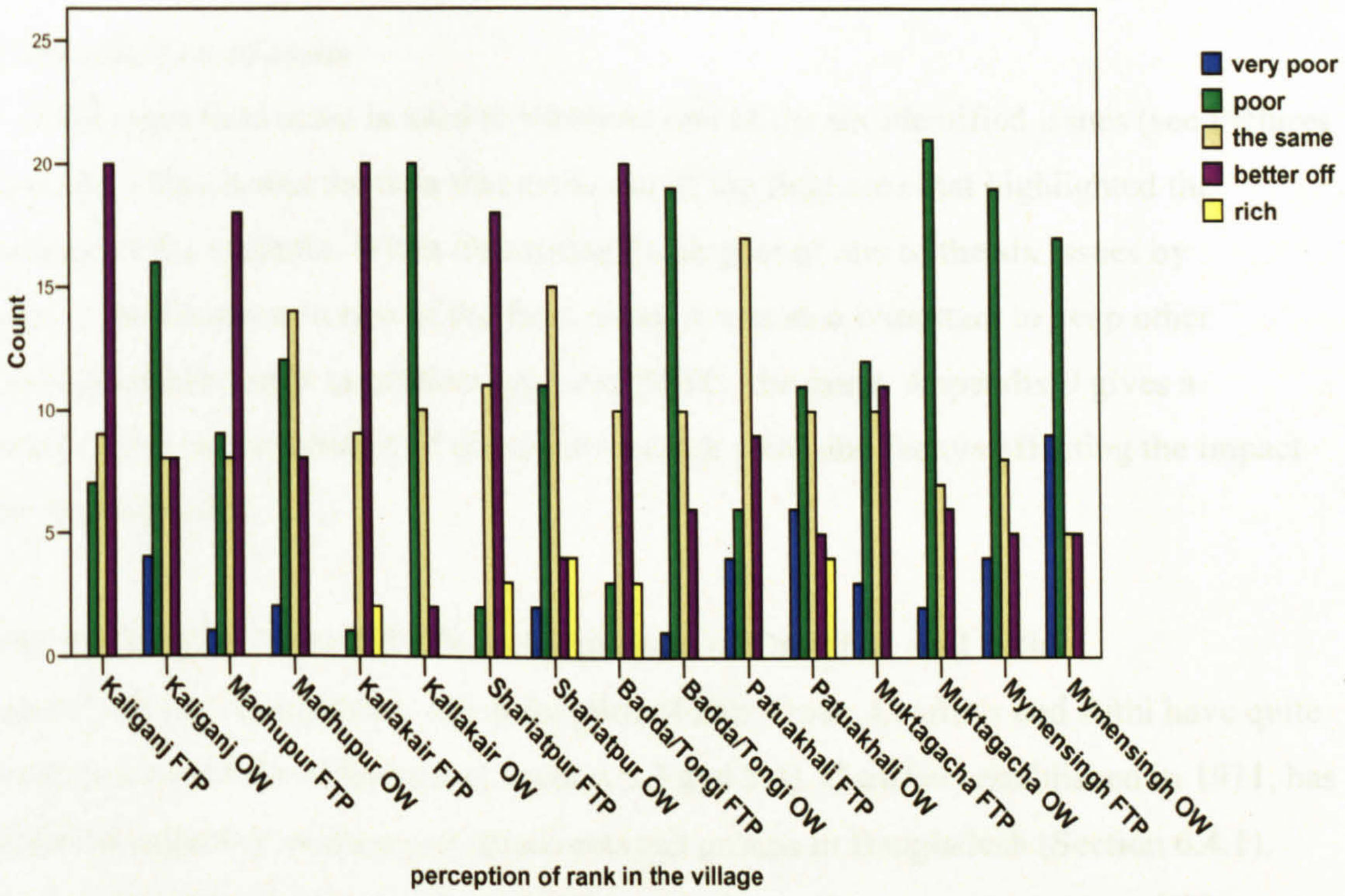
Note: $\chi^2 = 146.695$ df $= 9$ $p < 0.0005$ FTP=280 OW=277

Figure 9.3 Responses to the question, In the last five years are you more or less likely to express your views?' Comparison of Craftfair and Bithi areas



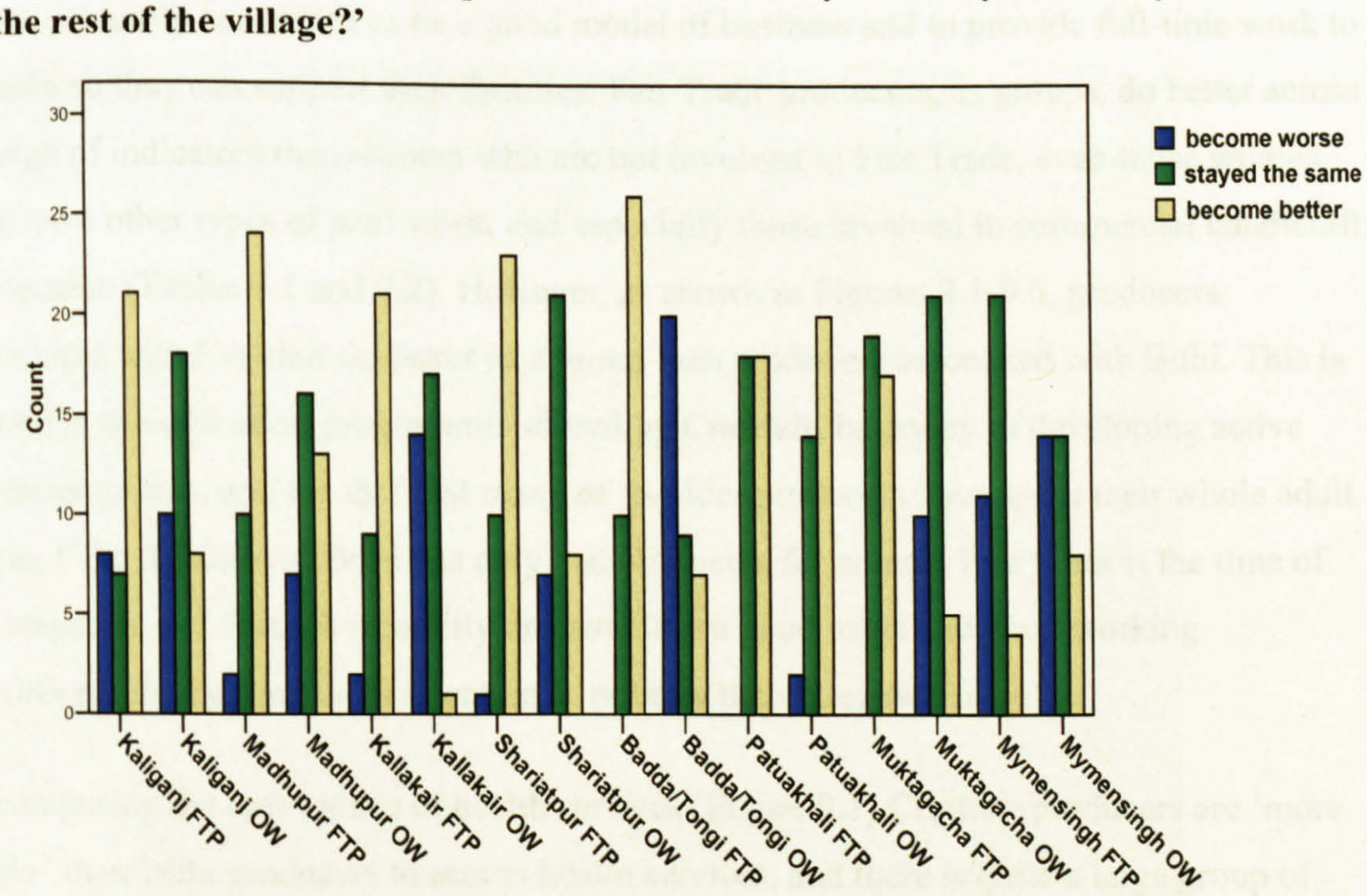
Note: $\chi^2 = 355.657$ df $= 45$ $p < 0.0005$ FTP=280 OW=277

Figure 9.4 Responses to the question, In the last five years are you more or less likely to express your views?' Comparison of eight producer areas



Note: $\chi^2 = 213.066$ df = 60 $p < 0.0005$ FTP=282 OW=284

Figure 9.5 Responses to the question, 'How would you rank your family in terms of the rest of the village?'



Note: $\chi^2 = 178.427$ df = 30 $p < 0.0005$ FTP=282 OW=284

Figure 9.6 Responses to the question, 'Has there been a change in the status of your household relative to the rest of the village over the last five years?'

9.1.3 The selection of areas

Each of the eight field areas is used to illustrate one of the six identified issues (see Pictures 9.1 to 9.16). Often it was the data that came out of the field area that highlighted the importance of the variable. When discussing the impact of one of the six issues by comparing the situation in two of the field areas, it was also important to keep other important variables, such as product type and SFTO, the same. Appendix 9 gives a summary of the characteristics of the eight research areas and factors affecting the impact of Fair Trade in each.

9.2 The Philosophy of the SFTO: a comparison of Craftfair and Bithi

Although both are committed to the principles of Fair Trade, Craftfair and Bithi have quite different philosophies and histories (Section 5.3 and 5.4). Craftfair, established in 1971, has a mission to empower women and disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh (Section 6.4.1), combining features of a developmental NGO with those of an export company. Bithi, established only in 1999, is a business that sells to both Fair Trade and commercial buyers, and is primarily concerned to be a good model of business and to provide full-time work to women so they can support their families. Fair Trade producers, as groups, do better across a range of indicators than women who are not involved in Fair Trade, even those women who have other types of paid work, and especially those involved in commercial handicraft production (Tables 6.2 and 7.2). However, as shown in Figures 9.1-9.6, producers associated with Craftfair do better as a group than producers associated with Bithi. This is related to the education programme offered by Craftfair, its policy of developing active producer groups, and the fact that many of its older producers have spent their whole adult life as FTP. In contrast, Bithi has only had producers for at most five years at the time of the research, and focuses primarily on providing a good wage and good working conditions, thus giving more attention to poverty than 'empowerment'.

In comparing the data on use of health services (Figure 9.1) Craftfair producers are 'more likely' than Bithi producers to access health services, and there is quite a large group of Bithi producers who say they are 'less likely' to use health services. In terms of having the confidence to express their views (Figure 9.3), a very large group of Craftfair producers were 'more likely' to express their views, while with Bithi producers, the largest number

Picture 9.1 Kaliganj, jute producer group

Picture 9.2 Kaliganj

Picture 9.3 Madhupur, producer working from home

Picture 9.4 Madhupur, Giara village

Picture 9.5 Kallakair, jute producer at home

Picture 9.6 Kallakair, courtyard

Picture 9.7 Badda/Tongi, embroiderers at the production centre

Picture 9.8 Badda, looking over the rooftops from the production centre

Picture 9.9 Shariatpur, terracotta products made at home

Picture 9.10 Shariatpur

Picture 9.11 Patuakhali, embroiderers at the production centre

Picture 9.12 Patuakhali

Picture 9.13 Muktagacha, paper lifters

Picture 9.14 Muktagacha, HMP plant

Picture 9.15 Mymensingh, product development section

Picture 9.16 Mymensingh, HMP plant

said the situation was 'the same', with many saying they were 'less likely' to express their views, and only a small number saying they were 'more likely'. In general, across a range of indicators in the survey, the producers with Craftfair experienced more 'good change' than the producers associated with Bithi (including the handmade paper (HMP) producers), except for the Bithi producers in the urban area, Badda/Tongi, who usually scored as high as the Craftfair groups. In fact it was the three other areas, Patuakhali, and the two HMP companies, in Muktagacha and Mymensingh that scored generally lower[52]. This was true in the perceived change (or not) in their rank within the village/town, and also in changes in status, where the four Craftfair groups and Badda/Tongi showed the greatest levels of change in status for the FTP (Figures 9.5 and 9.6).

The producers with Craftfair have the advantage of being members of an active producer group, unlike the producers of both Bithi and HMP (Muktagacha and Mymensingh) who have less opportunity for additional responsibilities since they work at production centres with paid managers. It is likely that the wider experiences gained through membership of an active group (Section 8.2.6) facilitates the ability to apply their new skills to other areas of their lives. Again, while all producers have made such gains, those with Craftfair generally do better (Table 9.1).

Skills and experiences	Craftfair producers	Bithi and HMP producers
More able to meet new people	86%	72%
More able to travel	67%	41%
Growing confidence	80%	74%
Maintaining Literacy	22%	13%

Note: comparison of positive answers, Craftfair n=138, Bithi n =144

Table 9.1 Skills and experiences used in other aspects of producers' lives.

There was also a difference in aspirations and their ability to achieve their aspirations (Section 8.4.3). The Craftfair producers were more likely to feel that they could achieve their aspirations, often by more than twice, than the Bithi producers. However, there were three situations where the Bithi producers scored significantly higher on aspirations and the ability to achieve them. This was in relation to setting up their own small businesses,

[52] The producer groups with Craftfair are (1) Kaliganj, (2) Madhupur, (3) Kallakair and (4) Shariatpur. The producer groups associated with Bithi are (5) Badda/Tongi and (6) Patuakhali, and the HMP producers (7) Muktagacha and (8) Mymensingh (Table 3.3).

getting a good education for themselves, and making a good marriage. These three aspirations were particularly important to the young women working at Badda.

The general pattern then, is that while all Fair Trade groups did better than groups of other women in their areas, the Craftfair groups and the Badda/Tongi area (to be discussed further in section 9.6), achieved greater change on average than the producers in the remote area of Patuakhali and the producers working at the HMP factories. Bithi still has a model of Fair Trade that achieves good results for their producers, and much of the difference might be attributed to producers only having had a few years of full-time work. One of the HMP companies, Banglapaper, had particular problems, discussed further in Section 9.7. A significant feature of the Craftfair model is the important role played by the producer group in stimulating and maintaining change.

9.3 The producer group: a comparison of the producer groups in Kaliganj and Shariatpur

The most active producer groups – ones that meet regularly, have developmental inputs, and run savings and credit schemes – are those associated with Craftfair and include the pilot area Monipur, and the two field areas, Kaliganj and Kallakair. Two of the other areas, Madhupur (discussed further in section 8.5) and Shariatpur, have Craftfair producer groups that play a more limited role. Kaliganj is one of the oldest producer groups where the women producers have taken responsibility for managing their group. In Shariatpur, the group is based on an extended family with village women as members; the group is managed by men and does not have an educational programme.

In a culture where women are not generally free to travel and meet with people outside their immediate family, the producer group gives them a vehicle to meet, to discuss, to share problems, and to engage in activities outside their own homes (Section 8.2.6). Involvement in Fair Trade production provides significant progress in addressing women's practical needs, but has yet to address women's strategic needs (Table 8.12). While recognising that analytical categories of practical and strategic needs can help in the study of complex change, it can also obscure the reality of both sets of needs being interrelated and not so easily de-linked from each other, involving similar processes of awareness-raising, discussion and action.

> ... group organization is often necessary for fulfilling both practical gender needs (such as increasing women's wages), and strategic gender needs (such as struggling for land rights. (Agarwal 1996: 24)

All the focus group discussions confirmed the importance placed by the individual producers on being a member of the producer group. In addition, the survey highlighted that it was rare for these women to be members of any other groups, except for the repayment of micro-finance loans (Table 8.4). While initially the producer group is used to provide services (such as talks on specialist topics, and administering savings schemes), there can be a shift to collective action, either in terms of support on personal issues (such as sending girls to school), or collective action addressed to wider institutional and political issues usually associated with men and the public arena (Section 8.4.2).

9.3.1 The producer group in Kaliganj

Kaliganj is an example of Craftfair's vision of a successful producer group. It was established in 1973 with 74 members, now has 48 members, and will soon divide into two groups of 30, allowing for 12 new members (Meeting, Education Officer Craftfair, Kaliganj, April 2005). They make bags, belts, sikas and cradles from jute (Focus Group, Kaliganj, January 2005). This area was considered one of the poorest in Bangladesh and many of the women were deserted, war widows, and/or landless. Now, after many years of handicraft production, coupled with access to a savings and loan scheme, they have bought land, built houses, and started some small businesses (Meeting, Education Officer, Craftfair, Dhaka, February 2005). The women appeared confident and self-assured, and they discussed the ways in which their lives had changed over the years as a result of having the opportunity to both earn a living and to be a member of a group, which had brought practical benefits to them, as well as giving them status in the wider community. The producer group in Kaliganj was able to initiate and support the kind of change that individual women wanted, but would find difficult to achieve on their own.

> We do not like it [dowry]... we would not take it for our sons, and would resist it for our daughters... there is pressure, but we would resist it.
> (Focus Group, Kaliganj, January 2005)

They shared their "new knowledge with their neighbours" and liked it when friends came to them for advice (Focus Group, Kaliganj, January 2005). Most of the women wanted to stay in the group, rather than retire and make way for younger women.

> They are not amongst the poorest any more, but still many of them try to bargain with me to let them stay in the group… (Discussion, Education Officer, Craftfair, February 2005)

9.3.2 The producer group in Shariatpur

The producers in Shariatpur have a very different type of producer group. Even though situated near the centre of Bangladesh, Shariatpur is poor and isolated, located on the left bank of the mighty Padma River which regularly floods, often destroying their houses and means of livelihood.

> My husband had a fish business. It was ruined by the flood. (Survey 457, Shariatpur, February 2005).

The villages are predominantly Hindu, practising the traditional caste activity of pottery. The local market for their goods has collapsed due to the availability of reasonably priced plastic alternatives and the increasing use of tin sheets in place of terracotta roof tiles. In 1985, one of the families approached Craftfair suggesting that with new designs they could make products for export. The family, in accordance with Craftfair's bylaws, set up a producer group that is managed by the father and sons of the family, and includes their wives and daughters, as well as women from the village as producer members. The women learnt the traditional male skill of using moulds to make craft items. They earn a piece rate for their products, while the men earn a monthly salary, considerably higher than what the women earn. The 'group' only appears to be a list of producers.

The Fair Trade partnership has been essential for developing the capacity of these potters to provide an alternative livelihood in an area of Bangladesh that has few options. However, it is the men in the family who manage the development process more than the SFTO or the women themselves through the producer group. The family also plays an important role in managing relationships within the village.

> About half of the village is in the Fair Trade group, so there is a general improvement and most of the village sees benefit. Our family also donated land for the village primary school. (Interview, R.P., Shariatpur, February 2005)

> Some people in the village are jealous, they can make threats. We have to be careful, maintain networks and contacts. Sometimes we go to government officials for help. We have to be careful to maintain good relationships with the people. (Interview, P.P., Shariatpur, February 2005)

Although this appears to be a conservative structure, there have been some advantages for the women producers. They have learnt new skills and have been allowed to earn an income. It is now accepted that women "can be potters" and this has contributed to a change in social relationships. However, the producer group is embedded in patriarchal family structures where the men are in control. The producer group was used to allocate work, but not as a means to improve the condition or circumstances for women.

> The terracotta groups are not so interested in sharing power or in the education programme, but I took the initiative, I did some workshops with them and also sent them the bylaws of Craftfair... they are becoming interested... (Discussion, Education Officer, Craftfair, Dhaka, 25 January 2005)

As this statement indicates, things are changing. During our field visit the wives of the brothers said they were keen to play a more active role. In particular, they wanted to set up a savings and loans scheme, to do the bookkeeping themselves and to accompany the men on visits to Dhaka (Research Diary, Shariatpur, 17 February 2005). The men also said they were now in favour of the women doing more, starting with their wives, then introducing other women to more tasks.

9.3.3 Comparing the groups in Kaliganj and Shariatpur

Using the indicators discussed in Section 9.1, clear differences were observed in the achievements of the women in these two areas. The women in Kaliganj were 'more likely' to make use of health services (Figure 9.2). The Shariatpur group had a large number of 'no response', unlike in Kaliganj where everyone responded. There was also a large group in Shariatpur who said they were 'less likely' to use health services, whereas no one in Kaliganj said this. Kaliganj Fair Trade women were also more likely to express their views, with none of the FTP in this area saying they were 'less likely' to express a view, whereas in Shariatpur there were a few women who were less likely, or did not respond, and many women who felt the situation had not changed (Figure 9.4). When considering changes in status in the village (Figure 9.5) the two groups of FTP are more similar, many saying that they are better off than others in the village, suggesting that both models of Fair Trade

groups are making an impact on poverty. In addition, when asked whether their status had changed in the last five years, the majority in both groups of FTP said they were achieving a higher status (Figure 9.6).

Analysis of these indicators, and other data from the survey, suggests that the Fair Trade income has made some impact on poverty reduction (and perhaps brought more inequality in Shariatpur), with enhanced wellbeing for families, but that improvements for women are greater in Kaliganj than in Shariatpur. These differences can be related in part to the way that the producer group operates in each area. While Shariatpur has a more conservative process, it could also be seen as one that is in tune with traditional culture (as argued by Morsello 2002), allowing time for the men to agree to change. The Craftfair approach to Fair Trade is flexible enough to incorporate a group that is initially similar to a family-run business. The contrast with other producer groups, however, demonstrates that the nature of the group, in particular the roles given to producers, the social relationships between organisers and producers, and the opportunities for new experiences, have a significant impact on achieving the 'empowerment of producers'.

9.4 Length of involvement with Fair Trade

Not surprisingly, years of involvement in Fair Trade correlated positively with achievements in poverty reduction, wellbeing and empowerment, and this suggests that the benefits of Fair Trade income and social benefits are not static, but build up through the years. The areas that show the most consistent signs of 'good change' are Kaliganj, Madhupur, Kallakair, all well-established groups, and Badda/Tongi, where the benefits of being in an urban area (Section 9.6) appear to have made up for it being a relatively new group.[53]

Producer Group Craftfair		Producer Group Bithi		HMP	
Kaliganj	1973	Badda/Tongi	1999	Muktagacha	1995
Madhupur	1975	Patuakhali	1999	Mymensingh	1999
Kallakair	1975				
Shariatpur	1980				

Table 9.2 Starting year of the eight producer groups

[53] In both Badda/Tongi and Patuakhali there were some women who had worked for a previous Fair Trade company that went out of business. This period is not covered in the research.

9.4.1 Kallakair – contradictions and complexities

Kallakair is one of the areas that demonstrates many of the characteristics of long-term involvement with Fair Trade production. The FTP were confident and lively, and gave generally positive responses in the focus group discussion. Most of the FTP said they were 'more likely' to use health services and to express their views (Figures 9.2 and 9.4). On many of the empowerment and social wellbeing indicators, they scored highly as a group. While many of the producers were positive about changes to themselves, the responses about poverty and economic wellbeing were more pessimistic. Although it was an area where one could see improved homes and small businesses, only two women in the survey said they had been able to buy or lease land, and only six said that they had used loans to buy assets or set up businesses. This was in contrast to the answers to general questions on perceived rank in the village, and changes in status (Figures 9.5 and 9.6), both of which show clear differences, with the FTP making gains through the years and the OW experiencing little change. These contradictory results, both within and between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, were in part a result of the women's interpretation of the purpose of the research. The producers used their status in the villages, to further their aims of firstly, staying in the producer group and secondly, influencing the choice of women for the new producer group.

9.4.2 Experiences in Kallakair

Kallakair was the third research area and in many ways the initial experience seemed good. The Research Assistants were working well together and were proficient at moving around the villages, finding both the Fair Trade producers and 'other similar women'. The focus group appeared to go well, with many women taking an active part in the discussion.

> *What changes have come to your village as a result of your work? (AL)*
> We can go to each other's houses easily… before we stayed in our own home… we have more money and so better food, and better clothes…
> the road was mud and the jungle was dense, but now there is a paved road
> We can save and build better houses, and also buy some land for cultivation.
> We hope our children will have a lighter life, a better family life.
> (Focus Group, Kallakair, 25 January 2005)

They also spoke of their small businesses (raising chickens, small livestock, vegetable gardens), made possible by taking out loans against their savings accounts.

Our return to continue the survey questionnaires proved to be a difficult day, and "everyone left feeling annoyed, angry or dismayed" (Research Diary, 27 January 2005). The same women who had been generally positive in the focus group were taking a more negative stance in their individual interviews, emphasizing their poverty and denying that they had other sources of family income. Many of their answers contradicted what they had said in the focus group. This was very disappointing, because in an area where Craftfair had attempted considerable development work, and where the producer group had been going for more than 25 years, the survey would show little support for the benefits of Fair Trade on poverty.

There were also problems with interviewing the 'women like themselves'. Rather than the leisurely stroll from one neighbour to the next, groups of women arrived to encircle the Research Assistants and me, insisting on being interviewed. These women wanted to join a Fair Trade group and saw an interview with us as a step to being invited to join the new group. We repeatedly said this was not true, but it made no difference. It was not a good situation for interviewing as there were many people standing around, often providing or commenting on answers. Leaders of the Fair Trade producer group were also there, "busy gathering women for us to interview … listening in and commenting" (Research Diary, 27 January 2005). Even men took part in the discussions, a sign that these interviews were seen as important. It was impossible to get the interviewees alone.

> We all tried to insist on this, moving our chairs or going inside, but still other people would come and answer for the women being interviewed. It all seemed pointless. Shefali said women and men began to argue about who would be interviewed. Nurul found the same thing. I was with Shahed and was amazed that women who had been enthusiastic about benefits in the focus group were now giving quite different answers… (Research diary, 27 January 2005)

We had arrived to do the research just as Craftfair was trying to encourage the women who had been in the current producer group for 30 years "to retire" and to make way for a new group with younger women who needed "the chance to be empowered" (Meeting, Education Officer, Dhaka, February 2005).[54] The women in the producer group were resisting this change. They wished to remain in the group because of the income and the

[54] Craftfair has bylaws that state that women over 50, or who have been in a group for longer than 20 years, should retire and be removed from the group list. One of the developmental issues they struggle with is introducing new, more needy women into producer groups.

status, and because it gave them some influence in the village. They also wanted to be involved in the selection of any new members. The Fair Trade producers were indeed confident. Unfortunately, they were using their confidence and power to 'distort' the research, suggesting they were still poor with few benefits in order to justify remaining in the group. This could damage their interests in the long term, since little improvement could be shown or attributed to Fair Trade activity. The institutional goals for the research were unlikely to be understood by them, but what they did understand was the possibility of influencing the makeup of the new group in their village.

9.4.3 Development goals and individual aspirations

The experience with this producer group challenges the notion that women's groups, such as Fair Trade producer groups, will necessarily share the wider developmental mission of the FTOs or NGOs. It may be that such groups are instead used to further mainly family strategies and that they become increasingly exclusive, adopting protective strategies in order to pursue their own interests. From their perspective this is quite understandable. The income of a Fair Trade producer is too small to achieve prosperity so the focus remains on the family, and the group becomes a privileged group, rather than one that necessarily fosters wider village level development. Indeed, seeing how much they wish to remain in the Fair Trade group is a good indication of how beneficial Fair Trade *is* to their wellbeing, and, counter intuitively, their negative responses are a sign of the relative success of Fair Trade rather than of its failure. Unfortunately, this more nuanced interpretation does not come across in either the survey or life histories, so their responses need to be understood within the wider social and institutional context.

Another, related interpretation, is that the villagers see Fair Trade organizations and researchers as having resources, and thus overstate their poverty and problems in the hope of qualifying for additional services.

> He (Shahed) asked if they had another source of income. I was looking over her shoulder directly at a large chicken coop filled with many chickens, but 'no', they had no source of income. We were sitting in a compound, on three sides there were well built buildings. This was not the home of a poor person... Shahed said that they treated us like 'potential service providers' and gave answers accordingly. (Research Diary, 27 January 2005)

Another factor affecting the situation was that many visitors come to this area, and the group had perhaps been over-researched (Meeting, Information Officer, Craftfair, Dhaka, January 2005). They are familiar with the kinds of questions that will be asked. However, it was essential to interview this group, since they make the hammocks that are one of Traidcraft's most successful products. They were therefore more sophisticated than other producer groups, and were making assessments about the possible role and importance of our visit to them, and our research to their own interests.

Thus, there were several factors that influenced the situation so that the women gave contradictory answers, demonstrating 'empowerment' in their manner, but little impact in some of their answers. These included their wish to remain in the producer group, their previous contact with buyers, and a view of many villagers that we might be in a position to distribute services. The researcher has to consider not only the responses given but also the context, including the perceptions of those giving the answers.

9.5 The influence of religion and culture

Several of the indicators were analysed against the religion of the respondent. Some have argued that it is not religion but patriarchy that disempowers women in Bangladesh (Hashmi 2000). My research suggests otherwise; all women in Bangladesh live within patriarchal structures, but Muslim women appeared more constrained than women of other faiths. The following table shows that on the indicators in Section 9.1, Christian women achieve the most change, the Muslim women achieving the least change as a group.

	Use of health services				**Express one's views**				**Change in status**			
Religion	Less likely	The same	**More likely**	Totals 100%	Less likely	The same	**More likely**	Totals 100%	Status worse	Status same	**Status better**	Totals 100%
Muslim n = 368	42%	34%	**22%**	98%	26%	33%	**27%**	86%	20%	40%	**30%**	90%
Hindu n = 116	30%	42%	**27%**	99%	13%	45%	**22%**	71%	15%	41%	**40%**	96%
Christian n = 81	12%	42%	**42%**	96%	3%	44%	**46%**	93%	16%	30%	**50%**	96%

Table 9.3 Comparing responses between women of different religions

In the one area that was predominantly Christian, Madhupur, many women from both of the groups scored relatively well on indicators of social wellbeing, though the FTP did better as a group then the OW. For example, FTP were twice as likely as the OW to use health

services (Figure 9.2). There are no women amongst the FTP who say they are 'less likely' to express their views (Figure 9.4) with most claiming they are 'more likely'.

9.5.1 The Mandi people of Madhupur

An area that demonstrates the complexity of ascribing positive or negative influences to religious and cultural characteristics is found in the Madhupur field area. The Garos, who refer to themselves as the Mandi people, are a tribal group who live in the hill and jungle area of north-eastern Bangladesh, which, given the thick forest cover, is less densely populated than other parts of Bangladesh (Research Diary, 16 January 2005). Traditional Garo society "was characterised by economic self-sufficiency and considerable class and gender equality" (Agarwal 1994: 154). The change from jhum (shifting agriculture) to wet rice cultivation, from communal to private land holdings, and increased population growth at the same time as access to their traditional land was decreasing, has resulted in growing landlessness and rising inequality within villages, where many are now forced to work as agricultural labourers (Agarwal 1994:164-165).

Women in Mandi society have many advantages: a woman's field labour[55] is very important, and she controls the produce from the land. The society is both matrilineal and matrilocal, with "relative equality in marital relations" (Agarwal 1996: 26). In my research in the area there appeared to be no second marriages, and if a woman was deserted (which seemed rare) she had a right to return to her parental home. Women often lived with or near their mothers or aunts, and so had help and support at hand. There was no mention of dowry or violence towards women, though this does not mean that they do not happen. The Mandi people have converted to Christianity, and the Catholic Mission is active in the area, particularly in funding and staffing primary and secondary schools (Interview, Sisters, Catholic Mission, January 2005).

Although Mandi women are more 'empowered' than many rural Muslim women, their tribal group is very disadvantaged in relation to the dominant society in Bangladesh. During the war of independence many Mandi fled to India, and on return found that Bengalis had taken their land. Their traditional homeland continues to be reduced due to the

[55] The daily rate for land labourers is meant to be 50 taka, but women are generally paid less.

movement of Bengalis onto their land, and some of the forest being taken by the government for a nature reserve. Without title deeds, they have been taken advantage of, exploited and cheated out of their land (Interview, Sisters, Catholic Mission, January 2005). For these reasons, the Mission feels strongly that education is essential to improve the position of the Mandi within Bangladesh.

9.5.2 Assessing the social and economic benefits to producers

Mandi women take an active part in family and community decisions, though men tend to dominate in tribal and caste councils, and are also able to move freely without covering their faces, and to interact with men in public arenas. Thus, when Mandi women commented on their decision making, and scored highly in the survey on 'indicators of empowerment' it is not necessarily because of Fair Trade activity, but more likely because these are their cultural practices. However, in situations where women in this culture would have greater freedom than Muslim women, for example going to market and visiting relatives, the FTP were more likely to take part in these activities than the OW. Thus, being involved in Fair Trade production interacts with the greater freedom of these women, and they are more likely to continue to use their social skills in new situations (Table 9.4).

However, it would seem that the contribution of Fair Trade employment to reducing poverty has lessened in recent years. The producers make a range of jute bags (Research Diary, 15 January 2005), and previously they could earn a good living. But, as orders have reduced and the number of women joining the group has increased, the income earned by individual women has been greatly reduced; often they only have a few days work a month, and then have to work as field labourers.

> We do not have any (FT) work on a regular basis... once or twice a month. This money is not sufficient to run the family. I work as a day labourer to provide support to my family. (LH7, Madhupur, April 2005)

Many of the women expressed a wish to learn additional skills so they could make a greater range of products. The purchase of sewing machines has given them an additional livelihood choice as they can make clothes and bags for local markets. While Fair Trade production is making a contribution to family livelihoods, other strategies such as paid land labour, subsistence farming, making products for local markets, and relying on relatives,

are probably as important. The contribution of Fair Trade may be more towards teaching skills and supporting literacy so that families can take advantage of new economic opportunities.

> Yes, it [FT production] helped me a little to bear the schooling costs of my kids. On the other hand, we obtained a loan from the group… I bought a piece of land with this money. (LH8, Gachabari, April 2005)

Although still poor, the combination of access to income, including a Fair Trade income, and their status within the tribal culture, means that Mandi women are able to acquire access to land and buy assets, for example sewing machines (through loans), at a greater rate than women in other areas (Table 9.4).

Area	Land FTP	Land OW	Loans FTP	Loans OW	Animals FTP	Animals OW
Kaliganj	36%	8%	19%	14%	22%	31%
Madhupur	**31%**	**31%**	**36%**	**25%**	**28%**	**3%**
Kallakair	6%	0	19%	0	19%	3%
Shariatpur	6%	3%	9%	19%	6%	3%
Badda/Tongi	3%	0	22%	17%	0	0
Patuakhali	11%	11%	31%	47%	36%	8%
Muktagacha	14%	3%	8%	25%	0	8%
Mymensingh	0	0	3%	8%	0	0

Note: Only loans used to buy asserts or to set up a micro-enterprise are included
Note: FTP = 36, except Kallakair (32) and Shariatpur (34). OW = 36, except Kallakair (32)

Table 9.4. Percentage of women acquiring land, loans for assets, and animals

Many women in this area represent the ideal for a Fair Trade producer: the ability to build on social (confidence, mobility) and economic (sewing) skills, to acquire assets (land and sewing machines) to improve the security of the family, and to link Fair Trade income to other livelihood strategies.

9.5.3 Working through other organizations

It is the Sisters at the Catholic Mission who have provided the support to the producer group. There are many people who have gained from their help and feel warm towards the Mission.

> I did not have any money to support the study of my son. One of the Sisters became kind and she asked others to give me work. I was very much in need of this… I was inspired by [another] Sister. She treated us very well … I managed to construct a house with this support [a loan from the group]. We did not have any other opportunities. (LH 6, Madhupur, April 2005)

However, this was the area with the most complaints about how Fair Trade production was being managed. There were criticisms about a lack of supervision and having to manage the work (preparing bills, organising transportation, allocating orders) completely on their own (LH9, Madhupur, January 2005). By devolving responsibilities to the Catholic Mission, Craftfair was, at times, unaware of what was happening at the producer group level. The most serious and common complaint was waiting a long time for payment.

> It would help us to receive our money earlier... We always wait two or three months to receive payment. (LH7, Madhupur, April 2005)

> The whole process is lengthened... papers are not moving easily from table to table, stairs to stairs, which causes delay in paying money to the group members. Many of the members are very poor. They go three or four times a month to Jalchatra. Sometimes it is difficult for them to pay for their travelling fare. This is one of the main disadvantages of this work. (LH 9, Madhupur, April 2005)

The problem of late payment was taken seriously by the SFTO, and one of the experienced women in the group was subsequently given additional responsibilities for which she is now paid (Meeting, Dhaka, February 2007). When the criticisms were brought to the attention of the Sisters at the Mission, it was clear that they did not have the time or staff to become more involved in producer group activities.

> There was a credit programme, but this has stopped, because we have fewer sisters who now work mainly with the schools. They do not visit the villages anymore either, but have the women come to the Centre. (Meeting, Sisters, Catholic Mission, Madhupur, January 2005)

Unfortunately, Craftfair is not able to do the development work it would like to, and the support organization, the Catholic Mission, has other priorities such as maintaining the school system. Thus, the achievement of social goals is lessened due to limited institutional capacity of both of the supporting institutions. The development of the women in this producer group is aided by their traditional culture's attitude to sexual equality, but is hindered by the Mandi's marginalization within Bangladeshi society. Conversion to Christianity supported many changes that could be measured (access to education and health care, freedom to move around). However, the religious institution, while having good intentions, does not have the staff or resources to adequately support the group.

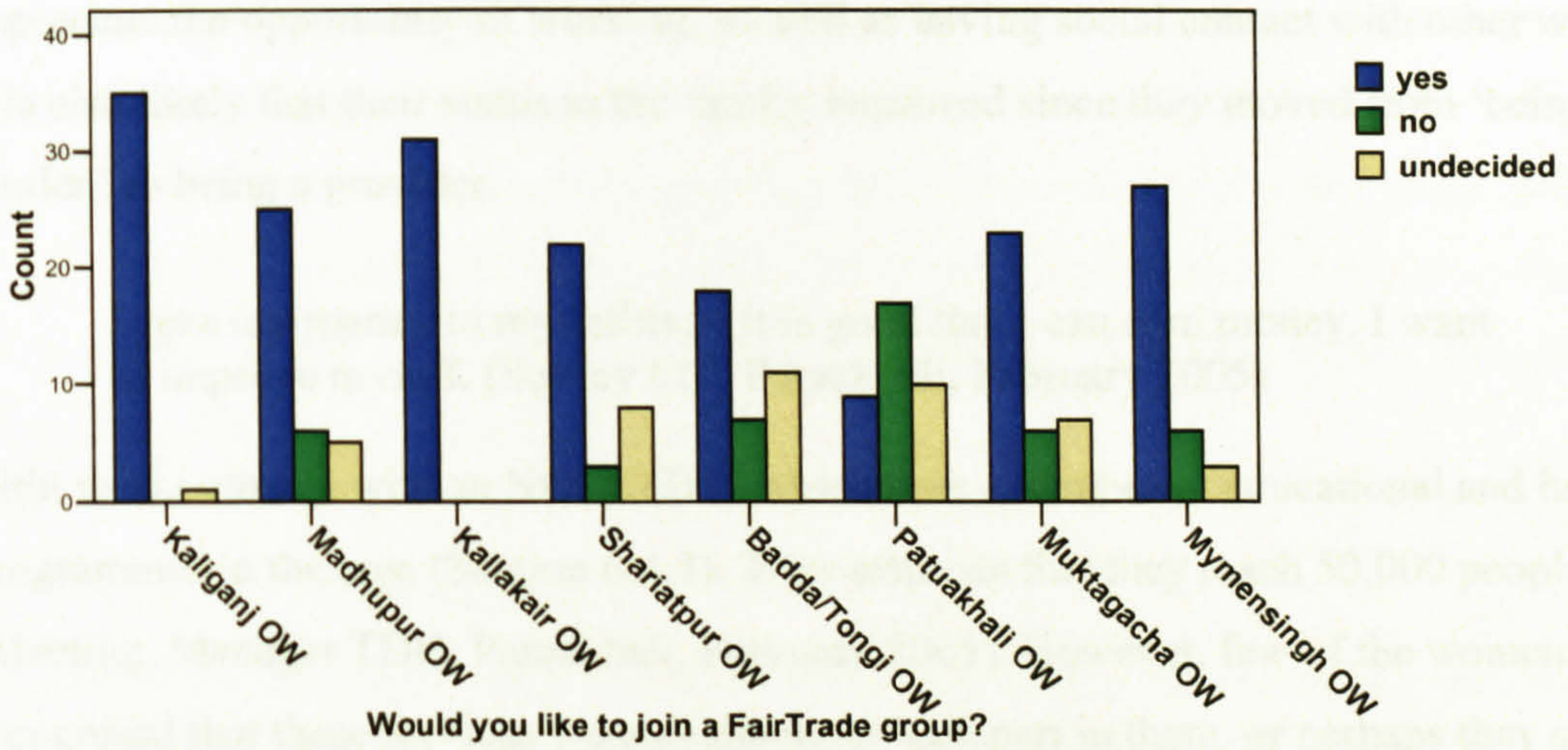
9.6 Rural or urban: a comparison of Badda/Tongi and Patuakhali

Bithi has production centres in Badda/Tongi and Patuakhali, where the women are engaged in embroidery and stitching and are paid a piece rate (Section 6.4.1). Both centres employ the same type of workers: women who need to support their families and, increasingly, young women who are not yet married but who come from poor families. The main difference between these two producer groups is that one is based in an urban area, Badda/Tongi, and the other is located in a very remote, rural area.

In terms of the indicators in Section 9.1, the Badda/Tongi group does as well as the three Craftfair jute producer groups, and is consistently better than the other three groups of producers related to Bithi (Figures 9.2, 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6). The producer group in Patuakhali shows the fewest signs of change. For example, the Badda/Tongi group, with the Kaliganj group, were the 'most likely' to express their views (Figure 9.4), and Patuakhali the 'least likely' to express their views of any Fair Trade group, with the majority of the group saying their situation was 'the same'. The perception of their rank in the village/town has become better for most of the women in the Badda/Tongi group, but in Patuakhali their rank remained 'the same' for most women (Figure 9.5). In terms of improvement of status, Badda/Tongi was the area with the largest group of women saying they had improved their status, whereas in Patuakhali the women saying their status had improved was equal to the group who said their status had stayed 'the same' (Figure 9.6). While all the Craftfair groups show a marked increase in the use of health services (the 'more likely' column), the Bithi/HMP groups, including Badda/Tongi, are 'less likely' or have seen 'no change' in the use of health services. The Patuakhali area is distinctive in having no one who said they were 'more likely' to use health services.

The difference in urban and rural context is shown in the possibilities for paid work. While the women in Badda/Tongi were involved in a range of economic activities, in Patuakhali the main alternative was being a housemaid or leaving their family and working in a garment factory in the city. Only one of the Fair Trade producers had another source of income, and only five of the other women had paid work. While the women in Badda/Tongi were talkative and eager to tell their stories, in Patuakhali many of the women were shy, gave short and often predictable answers, and did not seem to want to engage much in discussion. In addition to a lack of opportunity, the social and cultural values were

very conservative. When asked if they would like to join a Fair Trade group (Figure 9.7), in seven areas there was a clear majority in favour, while in Patuakhali there was a majority who said 'no', even though this was a very poor area with limited means of earning an income.



Note: n=280

Figure 9.7 Responses to 'Would you like to join a Fair Trade producer group?

Another difference was in the use of loans. Madhupur and Patuakhali stood out as the areas with the highest use of loans (Table 9.4). In Madhupur, the loans were often used to buy sewing machines and land. In Patuakhali, the loans were primarily used to repair their houses, or to buy assets for men, for example rickshaws and goods to support market businesses.

9.6.1 Why Patuakhali? Decision making in a Fair Trade company

In both Tongi and Patuakhali, many of the women had worked previously for a company that collapsed, and Bithi took on responsibility for the producers as "no one was caring about them" (Research Diary, 7 February 2005). If work is limited, then Bithi gives priority to the producers at Patuakhali, rather than Badda/Tongi, even though it would make more business sense to locate the workers near to their office in Dhaka.

> It is most important to give the Patuakhali women work, as they have no other alternatives, whereas the Tongi women are near Dhaka and could find other sources of income. (Meeting, Bithi Director, Tongi, February 2005)

There is little doubt that Fair Trade employment is reducing material poverty in Patuakhali. Many of the families were very poor, and some of the women would have been destitute

without their Fair Trade income. A family needs 3000-4000 taka a month to live in a village (Manager, TDH, Patuakhali, February 2005). The producers earn from 60 taka a day when they are training, to 100-150 taka a day for a highly skilled worker. Thus they can make a significant contribution to supporting the family. The women did appear to appreciate the opportunity of working, as well as having social contact with other women. It is also likely that their status in the family improved since they moved from 'being a burden' to being a provider.

> I give my money to my father... it is good that I can earn money. I want to improve myself. (Survey 617, Patuakhali, February 2005)

Bithi works closely with an NGO, TDH, which runs a number of educational and health programmes in the area (Section 6.4.3). They estimate that they reach 50,000 people (Meeting, Manager TDH, Patuakhali, February 2005). However, few of the women recognised that these services were available or took part in them, or perhaps they simply chose not to mention them.

Area	Micro-finance	Education, health	No services
Kaliganj	21 29%	7 9%	48 66%
Madhupur	24	27	27
Kallakair	4	1	59
Shariatpur	14	2	51
Badda	28	0	41
Patuakhali	**35**	**9**	**34**
Muktagacha	24	0	46
Mymensingh	30	2	39

Note: In each area n= 72, except Kallakair n=64, and Shariatpur n=70

Table 9.5 Services attributed to NGOs by women in the survey

Only nine women said they had services other than micro-finance from an NGO in Patuakhali (Table 9.5). This follows the common pattern, in all areas except Madhupur, of most women raising micro-finance as the main, and usually the only, service provided by NGOs (Table 8.4). The development inputs in this model of Fair Trade are not provided by the SFTO itself, but by an NGO, a "win-win relationship" (Meeting, Mangers, Patuakhali, February 2005), since Bithi provides skill training and an income, TDH provides services to families, and they share costs and premises. While it does have business advantages, the development advantages are less obvious. Many researchers have called for FTOs to cooperate with NGOs (Barrientos and Blowfield 2001, Millford, 2004). However, this

inevitably means that the development priorities are not in the hands of FTOs or necessarily linked to the specific social goals of Fair Trade.

Thus, in this rural area there are no work opportunities for women other than being a housemaid, or for a lucky few, working for the NGO. The conservative norms mean few women and girls get the opportunity to stay at school or to seek paid work. They have little contact with the rest of the country, and show few achievements in terms of social benefits to themselves. However, Bithi is committed to working in this area for precisely these reasons, and is making an impact on reducing chronic poverty because they provide a reasonable full-time income to women.

9.6.2 Advantages of urban areas

In both Badda and Tongi women had other opportunities for paid work, for example, the garment industry, small market activities such as selling homemade sweets, and as cooks, cleaners, and housemaids. In addition, a number of the women had established their own small tailoring and sewing businesses and were engaged in making clothes for neighbours and local markets. The move from Fair Trade producer to entrepreneur was thus happening in this area, due to a range of factors that combined Fair Trade employment and urban characteristics: acquiring new skills, having financial resources to buy equipment, sufficient customers able to pay for the service, and more liberal ideas regarding women and business. In addition, there was the unusual group of young women who were making choices that reflected their own ideas about the future (Section 8.4.3). Some were continuing their education while working at the production centre with the goal of getting a 'good job' at the end.

> This work has given me confidence and hope for the future… I want to start a business like Bithi, if I can get help from experienced people.
> (Survey 522, Fair Trade Producer, Badda, February 2005)

9.6.3 Comparing Badda/Tongi and Patuakhali

The comparison of the Badda/Tongi and Patuakhali production centres, making the same products and employed by the same SFTO, demonstrates that the benefits of Fair Trade production are influenced by whether the producers live in a rural or urban area. The women in the urban areas have more opportunities, and are able to apply the economic and

social skills they acquire in Fair Trade production to other income-generating situations, and to use their new status and confidence to improve their personal situation, for example through acquiring more education or taking a more active part in family decisions. The women in Patuakhali appeared not to do this. The Fair Trade work gave an income that went to their families. They did not engage in other economic activities, seemed less aware of services that were available to them, and did not transfer their social skills into making demands for more services, or using the ones that were available. Thus while Fair Trade employment is making a contribution to relieving poverty in both areas, it is in Badda/Tongi that wider changes and increases in social wellbeing are being achieved.

The advantages of urban areas, including the availability of different types of paid work, the possibility of establishing their own businesses, more flexible cultural norms, and contact with new ideas, positively support the gains made by FTP. However, as stated in the previous section, it is likely that SFTOs will continue to work in rural areas with few of these advantages, in order to give some opportunity in such areas for paid work.

9.7 Commercial viability of the SFTO: Muktagacha and Mymensingh

HMP (handmade paper) producers are most like casual employees (Section 6.4.1): they work full-time with set hours and go to a factory site, but if there are no orders, than there is no work and they do not receive a wage. The quantitative data tell quite different stories for the workers with Papernow (Muktagacha) and Banglapaper (Mymensingh). The use of health services and confidence to express their views (Figures 9.2 and 9.4) is similar for the two groups of Fair Trade workers, but significantly lower in terms of change than the Craftfair groups and the Bithi producers in Badda/Tongi. In terms of their rank in their village/town, the Muktagacha group has seen some change with fairly equal groups between 'poor', 'the same', and 'better off' (Figure 9.5), whereas in Mymensingh, the FTP who see themselves as 'poor' make up the majority. This group is more similar to the OW in Mymensingh than to the Papernow FTP. The answers to change in status (Figure 9.6) are also marked between the two groups of HMP producers: producers in Muktagacha have an equal group between 'stayed the same' and 'becoming better', with no one 'getting worse', whereas the FTP in Mymensingh show the majority staying 'the same', and with more 'becoming worse off' than 'doing better'. This suggests that the producers in

Mymensingh are not seeing much 'good change' in their lives, and are also quite similar to the women who do not work in Fair Trade.

The answers to the open question, 'significant change in their lives', also support this interpretation. Mymensingh was the only group of FTP where the majority (21 out of 36) said change had been negative, with 12 seeing little or no change, and only 3 saying they had experienced positive change. In all the other Fair Trade groups, most women reported that they had achieved improvements in their economic and/or social status. This is quite a discouraging result for a group of Fair Trade producers, so it is important to discover why the two groups of HMP producers, located near to each other, have such different perceptions of their situation.

9.7.1 Papernow – a well run company with good prospects

Papernow, located in Muktagacha, was originally a project of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Bangladesh, now an independent organization, Prokritee. MCC started the HMP industry in Bangladesh in the 1970s as a way of bringing paid work to impoverished villages. Papernow is a well-managed site with good equipment, and is able to provide many additional services and benefits (Table 6.3). The company can draw on support from Prokritee, which employs several designers and a marketing manager who actively searches out buyers. There is also a store in Dhaka that sells their products, so this company is not isolated, but can draw on a range of contacts and services as a result of being part of active Fair Trade networks.

At the time of the research there appeared to be plenty of orders, especially for sheets of handmade paper. The product development team (those who make products out of the handmade paper) had less to do, and at such times they help with less skilled tasks such as cutting up the raw materials. The wages depended on the type of work done; the product development staff, as the most skilled, earned the highest wage, while the 'helpers', who did menial work such as stoking the fires and drying of the paper, received lower wages. I was told that this was based on 'tradition'. However, the manager thought that this practice was wrong.

> I am trying to do something about this by sharing the lifting work with the helpers. My goal is to have everyone being paid at least 1,500, with less variation between the different tasks. (Meeting, Manager, Muktagacha, March 2005)

Such changes were in place by the time of my second visit to Muktagacha (February 2007), and payments are now more equal.

9.7.2 The impact of a failing company

The situation at the other HMP Company is very different. While they have a large site on the outskirts of Mymensingh, Banglapaper's equipment and buildings are in need of considerable investment. Although the company has a long Fair Trade history, they now appear isolated and do not know where to go for help. There is goodwill towards the company from other Fair Trade businesses: Bithi buys from them and provides advance payment. They are also given some assistance from an Australian designer (Meeting, Managers, Mymensingh, March 2005). But what they do not have is a long-term relationship with a buyer who has sufficient capital and capacity to provide them with the investment and business skills that they so desperately need. HMP is the main product, but they also do weaving, papier-mâché, and make products from wood, an attempt to diversify in response to the drop in orders for products made from HMP. At the time of the research visit there had been no orders for several months, and the women had not been paid for work they had done, because "some companies would not pay for the goods until they had sold them" (Meeting, Acting Manager, Mymensingh, March 2005).

The company is trying to abide by Fair Trade principles, and when asked about the benefits and advantages of Fair Trade employment, the producers gave similar answers to the workers at Papernow and other Fair Trade groups: they received training, sometimes advance payments, met as a group, and learnt about product development. The company also provides a school for the producers' children.

When asked about the disadvantages of being a producer, they, like other groups, complained mainly about the lack of orders (32 out of 36 women), though there were also a considerable number who complained about low or no pay, and waiting to be paid. Even though they receive some benefits, the fact that they had had no income for three months was their overriding concern. Many of the women recounted sad stories of their situation

and complained bitterly about their poverty. This was the only Fair Trade group that appeared to be almost as poor as the other women surveyed. For example, 64% were only having two meals a day, and many said they had taken their children out of school.

> Our financial condition is very poor... living condition [sic] is very bad ... we mostly eat only one meal a day, our health is worse... we in fact live on the money from loans. (Survey 819, Mymensingh, March 2005)

Had we come several months earlier it would have been a different story, as there had been six months of full-time work. It was therefore very hard to get a general picture of what it was like to work in this Fair Trade company.

> I do not know how to use the results from this field visit, as I don't think the current responses adequately represent this business. They are too geared to asking for "more orders" than thinking about the overall effects of Fair Trade employment, the benefits and shortcomings. Waiting three months for their wages is a serious disadvantage, but a good income for six months is an advantage and also needs to be included in the assessment. (Research Diary, 11 March 2005)

However, in spite of how bad things were currently for the workers at Banglapaper, the FTP at both of these HMP companies were still better off than most of the Other Women (OW). Many of these women were desperate for any type of paid work.

> The storekeeper at Papernow took us to a village of landless people who had been given land by the government. It was a small peninsula surrounded by water, densely packed with small houses. The women were very disadvantaged with no income and no opportunities.... It seemed quite hopeless with many cultural practices influencing the disadvantage of women and children. There were problems with the payment of dowry and men taking second wives and leaving the first wife and her children to fend for themselves. There seemed to be no stimulation, nothing to do and a lack of any productive activity.... (Research Diary, 4 March 2005)

The Research Assistants thought that women living in Mymensingh were the poorest and most depressed of all the women visited. This was because people did not have access to land or community support which was possible in villages, and there were fewer jobs than in Dhaka which has a thriving informal sector. We also found more multiple marriages and problems connected with dowry in this area (Meeting, Research Assistants, Dhaka, March 2005). Given this context, it is understandable why so many women were desperate about receiving such an irregular income from Banglapaper.

9.7.3 Issues for FTOs

The comparison of these two FTO makes a rather obvious point: that the commercial viability of the SFTO and its access to a buyer like Traidcraft, with its commitment, skills, and capital, are crucial to the possibility of SFTOs achieving the social goals of Fair Trade. Banglapaper appears to have just enough goodwill and orders to stay in business, but it is hard to see how they can continue indefinitely given their poor equipment, lack of investment, and inability to find buyers. The managers are committed to providing good working conditions and fair wages to their workers, but are unable to do so. This raises the very important question of who takes responsibility for a failing Fair Trade company. The neo-liberal approach would be that market forces (a lack of orders and inability to pay their costs) would force this company out of business, and their employees would be free to find work in a more efficient company. What is the 'force' in Fair Trade networks that deals with inefficient companies? There appear to be many organizations who would like to be more 'fair trade', who cannot find sufficient buyers, so, it becomes apparent that the supply chain, the relationship between NFTOs and SFTOs, is one of the crucial aspects of the sustainability of Fair Trade businesses.

9.8 Conclusion

This chapter has considered how social, cultural, and geographical context can influence the social goals of Fair Trade. The ways in which production is organised responds to specific situations, even as Fair Trade activities contribute to changes in those geographical and social spaces. The impact on poverty and social benefits varies. This research suggests that both poverty reduction and empowerment are being achieved in Kaliganj, Kallakair and Badda/Tongi. Reducing poverty is greater than achievements in empowerment in Patuakhali and Muktagacha, while supporting empowerment seems stronger than poverty reduction in Madhupur, with producers in Mymensingh showing little gain in either. Fair Trade appears to have a trajectory, with additional benefits often accumulating over time, for example the confidence to engage in new economic activities or to take part in collective action tends to take place with the older members or in the urban areas.

I have argued that the character of the producer group, the length of time a woman is a producer, and the location of production, have an influence on the developmental impact of Fair Trade. Religious and cultural practices also have an impact on what is achieved, and in

turn, religious and cultural practices are influenced and modified by experiences with Fair Trade. It is also obvious, though often not made explicit, that the philosophy of the SFTO is crucial to how development is defined and implemented, and the commercial viability of the SFTO is essential if Fair Trade is to achieve its social goals

These conclusions support the main argument of this chapter: different places tell different stories about Fair Trade, and understanding the context is essential in order to establish what changes are experienced by producers, which of these are attributable to Fair Trade, and how FTOs can improve on achieving their longer-term social goals. Even in one product sector (handicrafts) and in one country (Bangladesh) this can be a very complex undertaking. In Madhupur, Fair Trade is helping to improve the status of a marginalized group but is hindered by the limited institutional capacity of the supporting organization. In Shariatpur, Fair Trade is altering some of the gendered divisions of labour leading to changing social relationships, but processes of empowerment and change are largely in the hands of men. Fair Trade provides an opportunity for paid income in remote areas such as Patuakhali, but has limited prospects there for empowering women producers. In Mymensingh, the weakness of the SFTO limits the potential for change. Giving women a range of roles, the opportunity to develop new skills, and to participate in groups is particularly important to empowerment (Hopkins 2000b), with such an approach evident with the jute producers in Mirpur, Kaliganj and Kallakair. Suggestions to extend the developmental role of Fair Trade (Ronchi 2002, Bacon 2004, Utting-Chamorro 2005) need to consider such geographical and social factors, as well as how greater institutional capacity – both an increase in trained staff and greater financial resources – would be achieved.

There are also some broader themes to emerge from this analysis. The timing of research has a significant influence on the results. In both Kallakair and in Mymensingh, had the research been several months earlier it is likely that the responses would have been more positive. Understanding the perspective of the respondents was essential for interpreting the data. The results of this research tend to support the literature on the links between practical and strategic needs of women, and the important role that bringing women together in active groups can provide in achieving progress. Finally, the character of the SFTO is more

important than the desires of consumers or of the NFTO in delivering development, though strong partnerships between NFTOs and SFTOs are essential for commercial viability.

It would appear that long-term producer groups with active involvement of producers, located in urban areas, with good institutional management, are those with the best chance of achieving 'good change'. However, it is often the case that SFTOs avoid some of these positive characteristics in order to spread the reach of their impact by purposely going to remote locations to work with marginalized groups and encouraging the retirement of skilled producers to make way for new, unskilled workers. Assessment of impact needs to acknowledge the disadvantages that are part of the Fair Trade model of achieving development, as well as the flexibility shown by FTOs in responding to a variety of cultural situations.

Chapter 10 Conclusion: *"Shades of grey..."*

> Fair Trade is not any one thing, although the emphasis is on justice and fairness. It depends on the context and what has to be done, it is a continuum. It is not black and white, but shades of grey. (Partnership Officer, Traidcraft, Gateshead, August 2004)

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has considered the developmental impact of Fair Trade handicraft production in Bangladesh, by focusing on the social goals of Fair Trade: reducing poverty, empowering producers and building sustainable commercial institutions in producer countries. A review of the literature demonstrated that while there is considerable research on the global concerns of Fair Trade, and on the concerns of consumers (Section 2.2), there is less academic research on the practices and achievements of Fair Trade in producing countries, although there is a growing literature on co-operative based commodity production (Section 2.2.3). Important issues raised in some previous studies were the lack of attention to gender and to empowerment (Section 8.1.1), the relationship between Southern Fair Trade Organizations (SFTOs) and producers, and the need to better understand the philosophies of SFTOs. Some of the insights from previous research on partnership (Section 2.2.2) were also applied in my analysis. There has been less empirical research on handicraft producers (Section 2.2.6), though the research by Grimes and Miligram (2000) is useful in considering the global context of handicraft production.

The research was undertaken through a Northern Fair trade Organization (NFTO), Traidcraft, and four of their partner SFTOs in Bangladesh, focusing on four handicrafts: jute, terracotta, embroidery, and HMP. The research is important in helping to inform FTOs of the impact of their actions and programmes. As the majority of the handicraft producers are women, the research inevitably focused not just on Fair Trade, but the wider contextual 'position and condition' of women in Bangladesh. The Cultural Circuit[56] (Section 2.4) developed by Hall (1997) has been employed as an organizing device for subsequent chapters and as a means to uncover the diverse, often complementary, meanings attached to

[56] The Cultural Circuit considers five interrelated modes of actions, namely, identity, representation, production, consumption, and regulation that contribute to the production of a 'cultural product', such as Fair Trade. Ideas around identity and representation were employed in Chapter 5 and 6, and consideration of production (outputs) and consumption (inputs) were considered in Chapters 7, 8, and 9, with regulation (the use of power) considered throughout.

Fair Trade, and the everyday practices, norms and relationships, and uses of power that guide both what Fair Trade is (Appendix 1), and how 'development' is understood and practiced by these SFTOs. In addition, concepts and frameworks from development practice, such as gender analysis, a focus on the household, different views on poverty, 'good change' as defined by the producers themselves, and a livelihoods approach to assessing benefits and risks, have been used to assess the contribution of Fair Trade.

The specific questions addressed by the research are:

- What are the understandings of Fair Trade and of development within SFTOs in Bangladesh, and what are the institutional practices that sustain these understandings?
- What is the contribution of Fair Trade to poverty reduction, and to the economic wellbeing of the producer and her family?
- What changes do women producers want, and does Fair Trade help them to achieve these changes? Can such 'good change' be considered empowerment?
- How do Fair Trade groups vary from each other, and what are some of the important variables that influence the achievement of the social goals of Fair Trade?

The next section, 10.2, reviews the research methodologies, and brings the research findings from different chapters together in order to answer the research questions. Section 10.3 discusses the theoretical implications of the research findings. Section 10.4 highlights aspects of the research that could influence policy, and Section 10.5 makes suggestions for future research.

10.2 Synthesis of findings

10.2.1 The methodologies

A range of qualitative methodologies was used in the initial phase to explore the institutional practices of Traidcraft and of the SFTOs, and to understand the economic and social landscape in Bangladesh. A survey based on an extensive questionnaire was undertaken in eight field areas (two for each of the four craft activities), comparing the lives of randomly selected Fair Trade producers with those of 'other women like themselves' who are not involved in Fair Trade production. Twenty-one life histories were conducted,

selected from the 566 producers who took part in the survey. In addition there were five in-depth interviews with successful women who held management positions in SFTOs, and three focus groups with women producers. The research was conducted during three visits to Bangladesh, between November 2004 and February 2007.

10.2.2 The research findings

What are the understandings of Fair Trade and of development within SFTOs in Bangladesh, and what are the institutional practices that sustain these understandings?

Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the different, but often complementary, meanings of Fair Trade in the North and in Bangladesh; such meanings drive the institutional practices and social relationships that underpin what is done in the name of Fair Trade. Equitable national development, encouraging good business practices generally, and giving employment to poor people were the main concerns of the SFTOs in the research (Section 5.3 and 5.4). For the women producers, their handicraft work with SFTOs and ideas of 'fairness' were associated with a higher wage than they could get in other paid work, safe and secure work conditions, being treated with respect, an opportunity for new experiences, and the chance to socialise with other women (Section 5.6). It was argued that representations of Fair Trade are often based on Northern understandings of Fair Trade and the priorities of NFTOs, and are less good at including the institutional perspectives of SFTOs and the crucial role they play in achieving the goals of Fair Trade.

The partnership process appeared to work well with the FTOs in the research: co-operative relationships between buyers and sellers brought many benefits, for example in achieving higher standards in quality and product development, and in taking a stand against corrupt business practices (Section 6.3). The sharing of knowledge and expertise was found to operate at many different levels, and through both formal and informal modes (Section 6.3.4). All of these practices are significant in the establishment and maintenance of sustainable commercial organizations in Bangladesh, and such an organization is a prerequisite to achieving the social goals of Fair Trade (Section 9.7). Working within a 'partnership paradigm' presents challenges to doing research, where maintenance of good relationships is of paramount importance (Section 6.5), and in a country where it is

considered rude to be directly critical (Section 3.5.1). Concerns that did emerge were a dislike amongst some SFTOs of the many regulations and criteria for registration (Section 5.5.1), some of which were felt to be culturally insensitive. Facilitating knowledge from SFTOs to NFTOs, giving SFTOs more power and influence in setting standards, and supporting the *processes* of fairer trade (Section 5.6) remain important to the partnership ideal from the perspective of the SFTOs.

What is the contribution of Fair Trade to poverty reduction, and to the economic wellbeing of the producer and her family?

Two themes, which dominated the lives of many women in Bangladesh, are persistent poverty, and purdah, the practice of female seclusion (Siddiqi 1998: 206), where women are excluded from public spaces (Chowdhury 1994) and their behaviour and choices limited by conservative, patriarchal norms (Hashmi 2000). Many women would like to have paid work, but the opportunities are very limited. Applying the concepts introduced in Section 2.3, and contextualised in Chapter 4, the analysis in Chapter 7 found that Fair Trade handicraft production in Bangladesh made a contribution to the alleviation of chronic poverty, because it raised the absolute level of household income, and moreover, raised it to a greater extent than other available paid work opportunities (Section 7. 2). An important contribution is also made to lessening transitory poverty (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000) (moving in and out of poverty), mainly through the propoor policies and provision of financial benefits by SFTOS (Section 6.4.2), including savings and loans schemes, welfare funds, and savings towards pensions, which provide financial assistance in times of personal hardship (Section 7.4). In addition many producers took out loans against their savings that were used for productive purposes, for example buying sewing machines, calves, chickens, or land. However, a Fair Trade income, while a definite help can be a small influence, and is not sufficient to adequately deal with the huge vulnerabilities felt by poor people in the study sites linked to exposure to debt, natural disasters, serious illness, and violence and crime (Section 7.4.1). In addition, many women did not feel that their income was adequate to cover their needs; this was particularly true in relation to part-time rather than full-time work, and where SFTOs had periods with no orders.

Involvement in Fair Trade has other features that have an impact on household poverty. The producers learn skills that can be used to make products for local markets, or to establish their own small businesses. The households of many Fair Trade producers took advantage of other livelihood options, and thus handicraft production appeared to support additional economic activity, though the workload on women is increasing (Section 7.3). Involvement in Fair Trade production was also found to facilitate links between rural and urban areas (7.3.3), to provide an alternative to the traditional patron-client relationships (also found by Littrell and Dickson 1999: 40), and for some women, additional social networks that could be used to further economic wellbeing (Section 7.4.4).

What changes do women producers want, and does Fair Trade help them to achieve these changes? Can such 'good change' be considered empowerment?

Empowerment is a complex concept, and as discussed in Chapters 4 and 7, is understood in a variety of ways. NFTOs; consumers, many researchers in Bangladesh and some SFTOs would consider social and cultural factors, including the position of women relative to men (Mahmud 2002, Mayoux 2004, 2004b, Kabeer 2005, Wach 2006). However, many other people in Bangladesh (Gibson, Mahmud et al 2004), including staff in some SFTOs, understand empowerment as giving women the opportunity to contribute financially to their families. On this limited view, women producers were empowered to contribute to the economic wellbeing of their families (Chapter 7). However, when applying the definition of empowerment taken from a Bangladeshi academic (Mahmud 2002), which includes having meaningful choice and effective agency, then the impact on empowerment is less clear. Applying the frameworks discussed in Chapter 4 (Moser 1989, Rowlands 1997) it was found that being involved in Fair Trade had made a substantial impact on the practical concerns of women (secure work places, good conditions, reasonable pay, safe arrangements for children), but that less has been achieved in relation to the strategic concerns of women (inequality, little increase in power or influence relative to men) (Section 8.5). It is certainly not the case that Fair Trade employment inevitably leads to empowerment, due in part to the cultural context of production. In Bangladesh, a conservative, rural society, the empowerment of women and of poorer people is supported by many organizations, but is also actively contested by other powerful agents.

Many 'good changes', as identified by the women themselves, are being achieved, and these changes are often associated with being Fair Trade producers. Such 'good changes' include having a chance to continue to learn new skills, to meet new people, to travel more freely, and to have the opportunity to learn and to discuss issues with others. Being treated with 'respect' was a criterion of 'fairness' (Section 8.2). Having good relationships with their families is an important aspiration for most women, and opportunities provided through Fair Trade have contributed to increasing their confidence and status and have often improved their position in the home (Sections 7.5 and 8.4). Many women said 'their husbands now talked to them' and they were more involved in decisions. Staff at SFTOs also believed that violence against producers was less, as were second marriages and abandonment, now that women producers earned an income and had increased their status. Thus, many women, but not all, are achieving changes that they both want and appreciate, and being involved in Fair Trade production is one of the factors that is contributing to these changes.

How do Fair Trade groups vary, and what are some of the important variables that influence the achievement of the social goals of Fair Trade?

There were significant differences between the Fair Trade groups in terms of reducing poverty and achieving 'good change'. Access to health services, willingness to express one's views, perceptions of status and change in rank were used as indicators to compare the eight groups and sites researched (Section 9.1.2). The philosophy of the SFTO was particularly significant in defining and supporting developmental goals (Section 9.2). Being part of an active producer group, which gave additional roles and experiences to the women, provided the best support for 'empowerment' and the achievement of social wellbeing. It was also the case that the longer a woman was in a group the greater the gains, suggesting that the benefits of being involved in Fair Trade are cumulative (Section 9.3 and 9.4).

The influence of culture, religion and geographical location are complex, and to make progress on social goals, strategies need to be context specific (Section 9.5 and 9.6). While producers who lived in or near Dhaka could draw on the advantages of urban areas to improve on the overall impact of Fair Trade, it is often the case that FTOs site production

centres in remote and marginalised areas (thus reducing measurable impacts) precisely to begin to overcome such disadvantage. The gains on poverty and empowerment were different and not always achieved together. The institutional practices of the SFTOs were flexible and able to adapt to a range of production situations. However, disadvantage is built into a Fair Trade approach, for example in employing producers who live in remote areas, encouraging skilled workers to 'retire' to make way for new, younger and more deprived women, or providing part-time work to a large group of women, rather than full-time work to a few (Section 9.8). Such decisions increase the breadth of Fair Trade impact, but lessen its depth.

Over a range of both economic and social indicators it was found that the women involved in Fair Trade production do better as a group than other women, including those who have paid work. Many women (69% of those asked) would like to join a Fair Trade group, and those in the groups feel 'lucky', so it is perceived as a good livelihood strategy and better than other available alternatives (Section 8.2.1). However, there are some Fair Trade producers who do not feel their lives have improved, or that they are receiving significant benefits. In view of this, it is important, therefore, not to generalise and speak as if being involved in Fair Trade inevitably leads to increased wellbeing, though the trend, in my study, is in that direction.

10.3 Conceptual implications: linking back to theory

10.3.1 Implications for Fair Trade

There are several areas in which this research has contributed to a wider and deeper conceptualization of Fair Trade. First, understandings of Fair Trade have been largely driven by Northern concerns, those of NFTOs, consumers, and advocacy groups on global trade. My research argues that the views, priorities, and institutional practices of SFTOs should be reflected more in the debates and representations of Fair Trade (Littrell and Dickson 1999, Grimes and Miligram 2000b, Scherer-Haynes 2007). For example, the priority given in Bangladesh to national equitable development and improving business practices (Chapter 6) generally does not reflect the angst raised in the North on 'mainstreaming' and the growing polarization between radicals and reformers (Raynolds, Murray et al, Eds. 2007), since most SFTOs appear to want to influence the mainstream and

to have their products sold in commercial outlets in order to increase the volume of orders. In addition, the important role played by SFTOs in defining and delivering the social goals of Fair Trade (Chapters 7, 8, and 9) is also often hidden in representations of Fair Trade. While having a 'fair wage' and good conditions are important, equally crucial are the social relationships and institutional practices (of the SFTOs) that maintain changes, and that are employed to challenge the structural causes of poverty and disadvantage.

Secondly, my research has focused on the relationship between SFTOs and the producers, and how social goals are achieved, including the institutional practices of NFTOs and SFTOs. An emphasis on the ideal of partnership, and a concern for reforming global trade, has led to research into Fair Trade focusing on the relationship between NFTOs and SFTOs (Nash 2000, Tallontire 2000,Tiffen 2002 Ponte and Gibson 2005, Raynolds, Murray et al 2007, Scherer-Haynes 2007). Such an ideal acts as a form of regulation, good in that it cements relationships that sustain shared values, but negative in that it can mask critical analysis. Although there is little doubt that cooperation brings real benefits to both partners (Section 6.3), a way has to be found that can articulate the relationship between NFTOs and SFTOs in a more realistic way.

A third contribution of my research is to highlight the complexity of achieving reductions in poverty and increases in social wellbeing and empowerment. Some conceptualizations of Fair Trade, particularly in promotional material, tend to assume that a fair wage and good conditions (or better conditions than average) will reduce poverty and achieve empowerment for all producers. Literature on Fair Trade needs to make a distinction between the goals of the social movement (IFAT 2003, 2007, Wills 2006), and the achievement, or otherwise, of those goals (Section 5.2). Many studies confirm that there are social benefits and economic improvements (Morsello 2002, Nigh 2002, Ronchi 2002, Millford 2004, Calo and Wise 2005, Poncelet 2005). However, moving out of poverty and into secure futures remain difficult goals for many producers, and empowerment for individual producers is often a distant hope. My research supports the view that empowerment of producers (men or women) can only be achieved if SFTOs are proactive (Mayoux 2004, Tallontire et al 2004, Poncelet 2005, Utting-Chamorro 2005), and do more than provide paid work. The fact that some SFTOs may not foster empowerment must be

recognised within a broader conceptualization of what Fair Trade is in practice, rather than the 'ideal' of Fair Trade.

A fourth contribution of this research is to make the handicraft sector more visible. Debates within Fair Trade often centre on certification through FLO and commodity production based on co-operatives, where issues of mainstreaming using large commercial retailers and certifying plantations are contested (Raynolds, Murray et al, Eds. 2007). The handicraft sector has quite different problems. SFTOs are registered with IFAT, a system that is often not understood by consumers, who only see FTO registered products as Fairtrade. Handicraft production is not in co-operatives, but is often based at home, being invisible and involving repetitive, time consuming, low status work, with the opportunity to exploit a cheap and available supply of labour (Scrase 2003, Pearson 2004). The problems in this sector are to guard against the inherent exploitative potential for home-based work (Section 8.3.5), to maintain a skilled group of artisans, at the same time as individual producers are given the opportunity to move upwards into training or management, or outward into more modern employment.

Finally, much of the literature on Fair Trade has argued that the economic and social goals (movement or market driven) are often in conflict (Rice 2000, Renard 2002, Shreck 2005, Taylor 2005, Raynolds, Murray et al 2007). I would argue, however, that the economic and social practices of Fair Trade are mutually reinforcing. While recognizing that Fair Trade must be evaluated in relation to specific geographies of location, product, and relationships, I would draw attention to the following three sites of action (Figure 10.1). The first is mainly economic, and links to the goals of the global movement, providing paid work with a fair wage and good working conditions. The second, the site of production, the social relationships and the character of the producer group (whether informal, at a production centre or a factory site) is crucial for achieving and maintaining developmental goals. The third aspect of the model, sustainable commercial institutions, is essential if the other two objectives are to be achieved. Current research is often focused on achieving sustainable commercial institutions, and also, on the impact of Fair Trade employment, but less has been known about the social relationships around the sites of production, the producer groups, co-operatives, and workers groups, which appear essential for stimulating and maintaining the kinds of change which artisans and producers want. My research is a

contribution to more knowledge about the sites of production, and the relationship between the three arenas of action.

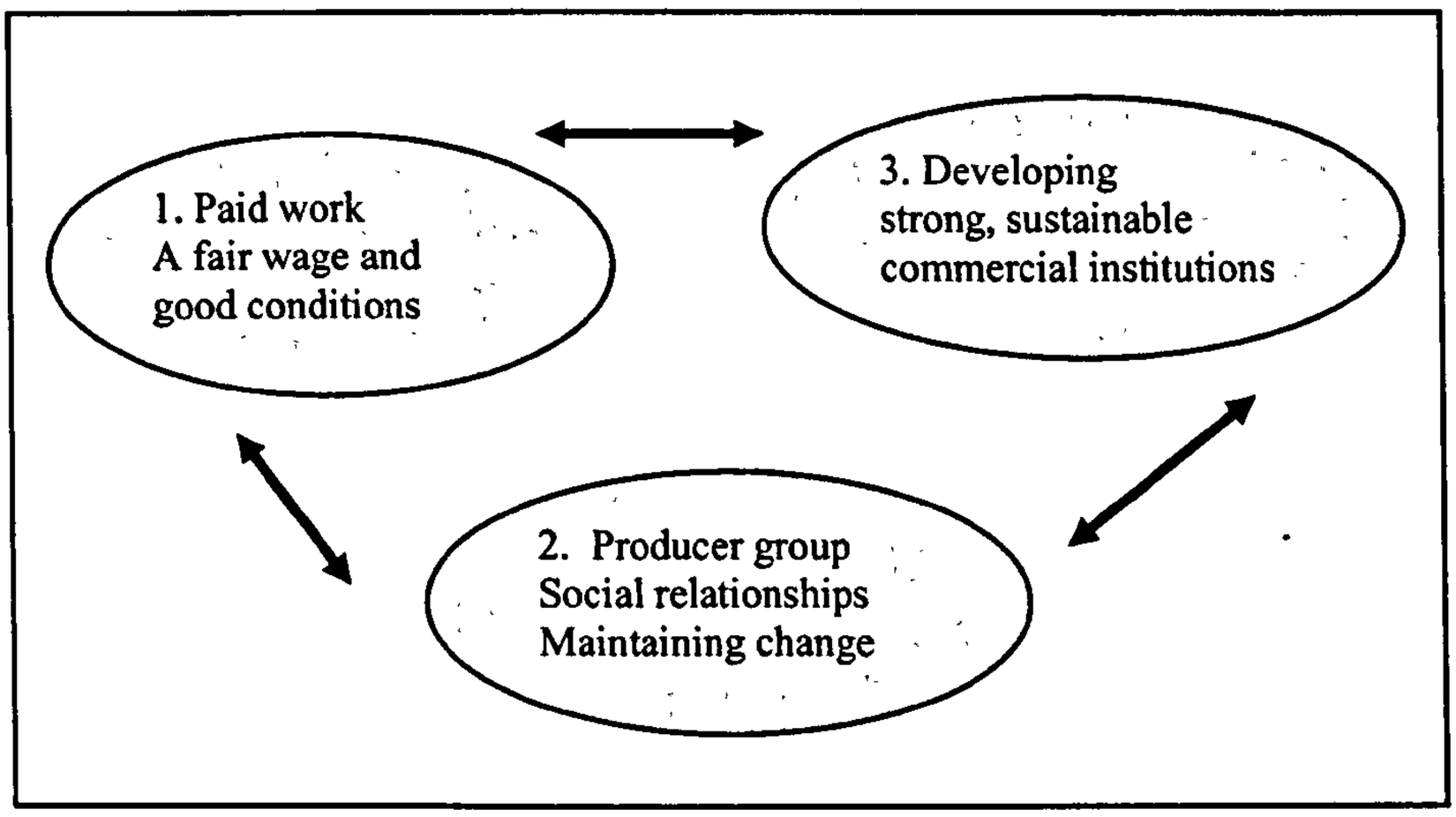


Figure 10.1: A Fair Trade model for achieving social and economic goals, including three mutually reinforcing aspects

10.3.2 Methodological implications

My research suggests that *both* qualitative and quantitative methodologies (McGee 2001, Kanbur and Shaffer 2005) are necessary to assess the multiple and complex influence of Fair Trade activity. Qualitative material from both producers and staff at SFTOs tended to give a positive picture of Fair Trade, and it was the quantitative data that often revealed the limitations, difficulties and challenges that remain.

The timing of research has a substantial influence on findings, since handicraft production is often irregular. It is particularly challenging to get an overview of a year, or over several years, as producers are understandably primarily concerned about the present and recent past, which is often untypical of the longer term.

A comparative approach has been very informative (Becchetti and Costantino 2005, Biggs and Messerschmidt 2005, Nelson, Martin et al 2005): comparing producers to similar people not involved in Fair Trade, and linking Fair Trade production to livelihood strategies of the household. Involvement in Fair Trade was also analysed in relation to other aspects

of transition in the society, as many of the advantages of Fair Trade employment were found to be the extent to which producers could take advantage of other opportunities *outside of* Fair Trade networks. In addition, analysing the achievements of different groups of Fair Trade producers (Chapter 9) increased an understanding of the influence of social and cultural factors.

10.3.3 Implications for knowledge about development

My study has intersected with some of the debates within development theory and practice, including those related to social capital, gender analysis, approaches to poverty, and the impact of micro-credit.

This research analysed the practices within Fair Trade partnerships as a form of social capital, which then contributed to the economic capital of the organizations. My findings generally support the importance of social capital to economic development, household welfare and group formation (Maluccio, Haddad et al 2000, Silvey 2003, Porter and Lyon 2006). Such practices as the sharing of knowledge and information, abiding by agreements to manage improvements over time, and jointly designing products, contribute to the building of trust between NFTOs and SFTOs, and between SFTOs and their producers. The maintenance of partnerships between NFTOs and SFTOS produces both social and economic benefits (Section 6.3). In addition, the possibility of social networks outside family relationships, or with patrons, improved both the social skills and the economic activity of some women (Section 7.4). Thus, the institutional arrangements within these Fair Trade networks are a good example of the importance of social capital in the private sector, and of the role it plays in improving the wellbeing of individual producers.

The practices of Fair Trade networks offer a challenge to the classical approach to economic development that emphasizes competition (Elkan 1995, Kambhampati 2004). It is cooperation and the benefits of social capital that provide many of the advantages generally attributed to competition: choice, quality, and access to markets (Sections 6.3.1,6.3.2 ,6.3.3). In addition, the efficient sharing of information (Section 6.3.4) improves markets generally and is achieved through cooperation, not competition. Such practices support a behavioural economics approach (Dawnay et al 2005). Critics of Fair Trade

(Lindsey 2004, Doane 2005, Whyte 2005) are not able to explain how such economic goals have also been achieved under Fair Trade.

The writings on chronic and transitory poverty (Baulch and Hoddinott 2000, Dercon and Krishnan 2000, McMulloch and Baulch 2000, Sen and Hulme 2005), were generally supported by my research, where it was found that chronic poverty responded to the increased income provided by Fair Trade employment (Section 7.2), and transitory poverty was widespread and was lessened through a combination of improvements in human capital and additional financial benefits (Section 7.4). Many development professionals and academics favour a broader view of poverty comprising multiple dimensions and a focus on wellbeing (Korten 1995, Graham 2004, Camfield, Choudhury et al 2006, Devine, Camfield et al 2006), and are generally dismissive of the World Bank's emphasis on income levels to assess poverty. However, in my survey I found that women spoke of poverty primarily in terms of income, and saw income, or lack of it, as the main variable affecting wellbeing (Section 7.5.2). Other issues such as access to services, freedom from violence, responsive government, and environmental degradation, were seldom raised, and the emphasis was almost always on the economic, with other achievements seen as coming from an improved economic situation. My research supports the primacy of income to understanding and measuring poverty, a fairly unfashionable position within development circles.

Useful information was also gathered about the impact and uses of micro-finance, which tends to go against the prevailing norm. There have been many evaluations of the impact of micro-finance (Develtere and Huybrechts 2005, Holvoet 2005, Tulchin 2005). Many studies suggest that there is an impact on poverty (Halder 2003, Izugbara 2004), but that micro-finance often benefits the better off among poor households (Montgomery, Bhattacharya et al 1996) while the impact on empowerment is highly variable (Hunt and Kasynathan 2001, Kabeer 2001, Mahmud 2002, Sharif 2003, Mayoux 2005). The assumption behind many of these studies is that micro-finance is used for productive purposes. I found that 75% of the women used microfinance for recurrent expenditure, not for acquiring assets or to set up micro-enterprises (Section 7.2.5). This suggests that micro-finance is seen as an additional source of income, to be used in lean times or for special occasions such as weddings, and not primarily as a means to break out of poverty. Many of the households were in debt, sometimes as a result of a failed enterprise, or because of lack

of income or chronic ill health. Many were also very critical of the repayment practices of NGOs. The data challenges the more positive view given by many organizations involved in micro-finance, and supports the critiques of micro-finance as a means to reduce poverty over the long term (Chowdhury, Ghosh et al 2005).

My research drew on many studies of gender and empowerment (Boserup 1970, Beneria 1982a, 2003, Elson 1991, Agarwal 1996, Bodman and Tohidi 1998, Kabeer 1999, 2000, 2005, Mosedale 2005). The framework of practical and strategic needs (Moser 1989), although sometimes critiqued for being simplistic, was useful in identifying both the strengths and limitations of the gender policies of the SFTOs (Section 8.5). Many of the gains made by women producers could be related to new uses of power (Rowlands 1997), and most felt their position within their households had improved. Comparison of the eight field sites suggests (Chapter 9), that the active involvement of women (Hopkins 2000b, Mayoux 2005, Poncelet 2005) is the most important strategy for providing them with the skills and confidence to pursue additional goals (Sections 8.2.6, 8.4 and 9.3). Providing paid work to women with social and financial benefits is very important. But, so too is attention to the social, institutional and organizational practices that maintain her lower status (Bebbington, Lewis et al 2007), where change is often quite difficult to achieve.

Finally, in relation to knowledge on Bangladesh, some of my findings contradicted assumptions about the country. For example, the women interviewed were generally appreciative of services provided by government (improved roads, clinics, schools), but were unaware of or did not use services provided by NGOs, other than receiving micro-finance (Section 8.3.3). The state in Bangladesh is often criticised (Jahan 2001, Riaz 2005, 2006; Zadek et al 2005), while NGOs and donor funded programmes are widespread (Hossain and Matin 2004, Blair 2005, Fruttero and Gauri 2005, Gauri and Galef 2005). The prevailing religion was significant in achieving 'good change', challenging the view that women are mainly disadvantaged through patriarchy (Section 9.5). Finally, the cultural 'ideal' family situation, where women are supported by their male relatives in Bangladesh, was only possible in a small minority of the households surveyed (Sections 8.2.1), though such an ideal is often used to control and deny opportunities to women (Amin 1997, Bodman and Tohidi 1998, Haque 2002, Yeoh, Teo et al 2002, Ahmed and Bould 2004).

10.4 Implications for policy

The discussion of the research findings leads to several related recommendations for policy within Fair Trade networks.

- Accountability upwards from SFTOs to NFTOs and consumers is provided through FLO, IFAT, and partnership agreements. Issues raised in the research suggest there is also a need for greater accountability down the chain, from NFTOs to SFTOS, and from SFTOs to producers. The impact of Fair Trade is often linked to improvements *across* the society, village, and household – and understanding these linkages and accountabilities is also important to the social goals of Fair Trade.

- Research intended to improve institutional practices and to contribute to knowledge of Fair Trade in particular situations needs to be independent of, but facilitated by FTOs, use a range of methodologies, have a large sample, and make more links to other household strategies and to the wider society.

- In addition to the above research, SFTOs should develop their own monitoring systems for doing short, intensive and applicable research.

- Representations, information and discussions of Fair Trade should make clearer the central role played by SFTOs in delivering on the social goals of the movement.

- NFTOs should continue to find ways to enable and support the development efforts of SFTOs, including how these could be financially supported. This might include partnerships with other organizations, or working together on identified campaigns and issues.

- SFTOs face many choices that will have an impact on poverty and empowerment, for example, breadth vs. depth, rural vs. urban locations, home-based vs. production centres. Each choice can be justified in business terms, and in relation to the philosophy of the SFTOs, but the possible implications for achieving developmental goals must also be understood.

- Reducing poverty, especially chronic poverty, will be affected most by improving pay rates for the producers, including the piece rate and the provision of full-time work.

- The most important variable affecting empowerment is being part of an active group that provides artisans with additional learning and opportunities for new experiences. Empowerment would also probably be increased by moving the producers to employment status, at production centres with wages rather than a piece rate. In addition, SFTOs would need to increase their involvement in activities addressing the 'strategic needs' of producers.

- In the handicraft sector, FTOs need to be proactive and aware of any circumstances that exploit women in what is a low status, low productivity sector, but which has potential for improving women's wellbeing at particular times.

10.5 Recommendations for future research

One of the issues that emerged from the PhD research was the different needs and outcomes of Fair Trade employment depending on the age of the women. In discussion with the FTOs, it was agreed that research into the lifecycle of the producer, seeing how Fair Trade employment interacted with the changing circumstances of her life, would be very interesting. Fortuitously, two new groups were being formed in 2006, a new jute producer group in Kallakair (a rural area), and new embroidery workers in Badda (an urban area). I have been involved in setting up and overseeing a longitudinal study of these women.

The research methodology of combining a large comparative survey with selective qualitative life histories and interviews generated a great deal of new data. Inevitably, there are areas that emerged that would benefit from additional research. The following thematic studies would be useful to further understand the contribution of Fair Trade employment to sustainable improvements in wellbeing.

- Studies on intergenerational change, in particular the occupations of children, and improvements, or not, in their social and economic wellbeing. My study was able to

capture the change between producers and their parent's generation, but was more limited in assessing change in the generation of their children.

- Studies that focus on the transitions from rural to urban livelihoods, from agricultural to non-agricultural income, and the relationship of Fair Trade to new economic activities of the household.

- Research with specific organizations to understand the capacity and resources needed to improve on the developmental role of SFTOs

- Research on the movement of handicraft producers into new roles, for example training, marketing or management, into their own businesses, or out of handicrafts and into vocational or modern skill-based economic activity

10.6 Conclusion

Through an extensive empirical study based in Bangladesh, this thesis has argued that Fair Trade handicraft production has brought significant benefits to many women producers, including a reduction in poverty, improvements in social wellbeing, and means to achieve 'good change' as identified by them. This has been a result of having paid work under good conditions, additional financial benefits, and the unusual opportunities provided through SFTOs for new experiences, such as being a member of a group that provides a social network and the possibility to learn and discuss, to travel and to meet new people, and improvements in their personal status as a result of earning an income, learning skills and being involved in what is seen as respectful work. The producers may still be poor and face many vulnerabilities, but their lives are generally better than those of their parents, and they have hope and often the means to improve the lives of their children. Fair Trade activities are geographically and socially specific, and impacts are related to the national, local and social contexts. The impact is about *shades of grey*; it is neither as inevitable as some representations suggest, nor as limited as other critiques maintain.

IDENTITY
A fair wage
Long term partnership between buyers and sellers
NFTOs: reforming global trade, with action on poverty
SFTOs: equitable national development, spread of good business practices
Producers: a fair wage, new experiences, improved status, negotiating new roles

PRODUCTION
A commodity to sell
A social and political movement
Cultures of production within and between ATOs
Achievement of social goals

REPRESENTATION
Catalogues, reports, Social Accounts
Stories of individual producers
Commonalities between producers and consumers
The 'difference' in a Fair Trade product
Advocacy and research activities
The product and the politic

REGULATION
Competitive markets
Multilateral institutions and state regulation
Cultural and social norms
Theories, research and evaluations
Self regulation
Understandings within Fair Trade organizations

CONSUMPTION
Active, knowing and informed
Part of the tradition of ethical consumption
Growing interest in regional markets
The northern consumer well known
The Fair Trade consumer in producing countries?

Appendix 1 The Circuit of Culture applied to the practices of Fair Trade, where each of the five sites influence all other sites of action

SELECTED STUDIES ON ETHICAL TRADE	METHODOLOGY	BENEFITS WORKERS	BENEFITS ORGANIZATIONS	LIMITATIONS CRITIQUES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Tallontire 1999	Multi-layered case study – Cafédirect, focus on partnership process	Very few Impact hard to assess	Partnership problematic – depends on Co-operative, limited commitment, bureaucratic approach	ATOs limited advocacy role, do not change structures	Need participation of workers More development inputs, strengthen ATOs and producer rights
Barrientos, Blowfield 2001	Review of literature Ethical trade distinct from Fair Trade	Focus on workplace issues, human rights standards		Many different codes of conduct and standards Compliance is Northern driven	Participatory Social Auditing (PSA) multi-stakeholder approach Means to raise awareness and to facilitate change
NRET/NRI Studies Blowfield, Malins et al 2002 Tallontire, Smith et al 2004	Unclear Focus on fair trade, forest certification, and organic	Creating livelihood options, access to new markets Benefits to human and social capital Evidence not clear	Can bring together diverse stakeholders, encouraging new partnerships	Income to men Reliance on weak institutions Most disadvantaged excluded Need for gender analysis	Promote crop diversification Increase participation of workers Viability can be dependent on development inputs (a kind of subsidy)
DFID – impact on poverty 2002	Presentations: Body Shop. NRI, Ronchi, Ashley (SLA) Methodology unclear	BS: income and stronger community, favourable trading terms Ronchi: many levels of impact, income also capacity building		NRI: disconnect between workers views and codes Difficulties of Evaluation and Monitoring	Use SLA and rights based approaches to analyse benefits Need to challenge assumption between compliance and poverty reduction
Hale and Oponde 2005 Horticulture, cut flowers	100 semi-structured interviews, 13 focus groups, interviews	PSA to uncover problems and issues (casual work, no protection, harassment	Establishing the Horticulture Ethical Business Initiative (HEBI)	Downward pressure from supermarkets – buyer controlled supply chain	Local PMSA to hear problems and to overcome problems and to further code implementation
Tallontire, Dolan et al 2005	Gender value chain		Top-down approach to implementation of codes does not necessarily achieve good outcomes	Need to address gendered economy	PSA
Smith and Barrientos 2005	Theorises types of relationships			FT: relational value chains trust mutual dependence ET: industrial co-ordination in buyer driven modular value chains	Convergence of ET and FT Value Chain governance is Important for impact of FT and ET – both may do little to address unequal power in markets
Barrientos 2005	Learning approach				
Nelson, Martin et al 2005, Martin, Nelson et al 2006	Value Chain Analysis Mixed methods, Comparative approach	Codes of practice mainly benefit permanent workers, association with livelihoods		Codes of practice may not reach casual workers	Training, work with other organizations

SELECTED STUDIES ON COFFEE	METHODOLOGY	BENEFITS WORKERS	BENEFITS ORGANIZATIONS	LIMITATIONS CRITIQUES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Tallontire 2000, Ronchi 2002, Millford 2004	Case studies of selected co-operatives Small sample size	Economic and social Direct (income) Indirect (institutional development)	Helps to build commercial SFTO Financial support and access to markets	Co-operatives need strong management Partnerships only work with shared commitment, clear responsibilities, boundaries	Encourage government support Development inputs Establish collaborative projects to engage with poorest Pay attention to organizational support
Villasenor 2000 Haiti	Oxfam: participatory, no other details	Income, access to food, schooling, greater gender equity, access to credit, information, knowledge	Technology, information, credit to co-operatives	More workloads for women	Links made between changes and good practices Importance of participatory evaluation and monitoring
DFID 2000	Case studies: coffee in Tanzania and cocoa in Ghana	Cannot separate benefits from Fair Trade and non-Fair Trade production	Capacity building and trade facilitation	Tensions between profitability and development aims of Fair Trade	DFID to support institutional capacity, new alliances with FTOs to influence policy making, and encourage dialogue between Fair Trade and mainstream business
Bacon 2005 Fair Trade and organic coffee, Nicaragua	Survey of 228 farmers, focus groups, interviews with leaders	Reduces household vulnerability (cash crop) Links to diverse markets	Premium spent on productive infrastructure Formation of unions of cooperatives	Income from FT and organic coffee not enough to offset decline in quality of life	Improve quality of coffee to access specialist markets Critical dialogue to engage with problems
Utting-Chamorro 2005	Qualitative interviews participatory methods coffee co-operatives in Nicaragua	Income, improved gender equity, community development activities, awareness of environmental problems, improved security	Organizations made stronger by access to Fair Trade networks and markets	Benefits limited by debt inherited by farmers, lack of government support, and changes in world prices for coffee Women complained about gendered division of labour	Diversify markets Training in effective management skills Create forums for sharing Engage in wider development processes and problems
Colorado State University Raynolds 2002, Nigh 2002, Taylor 2002, 2005 Murray, Raynolds et al 2006	7 extensive case studies: Mexico (5), El Salvador (2), Guatemala (1) two year project	Direct: income, access to credit, networks, self-esteem, access to development projects Indirect: stronger co-operatives, new knowledge	Market apprenticeship, financing, stronger organizations, supports organic accreditation, development of second level organizations, growing ability to deal directly with buyers	Lack of understanding of FT Tension between economic and democratic forms of decision making Lack of transparency in FLO Governance tensions within co-operatives Co-operatives can replicate rather than challenge gender inequalities	Integrate training about FT into certification process Unify various certifications Increase involvement of producers in FLO and other northern FTO Return to more direct contact between producers and consumers

SELECTED STUDIES ON FAIR TRADE	METHODOLOGY	BENEFITS PRODUCERS	BENEFITS ORGANIZATIONS	LIMITATIONS CRITIQUES	CONCLUSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS
Robbins, Roberts et al 2000, Hopkins 2000 Redfern 2000 Tallontire 2001	Reviews of case studies, interviews with producers	Economic and social – trust, self esteem, access to skills	Business Development Skills key to sustainability Relationship between fair and organic trades Need to pay attention to quality of partnership	Statements of impact often based on anecdotal evidence Need more development inputs (Tallontire) Separate trade from development (Hopkins)	Need rigorous research Active participation of producers key to success Gender roles often unaffected, need more gender analysis and proactive policies
Tiffen 2002 Cocoa	Case study, Kuapa Kokoo Cooperative Ghana	Loans, training, dignity	Development within context of successful business	Only supports successful co-operatives Still many needs	Learn from successful partnerships
Ronchi 2002 coffee	Interviews 28 farmers, workshops	Direct benefits (wages and premium) less important than social and indirect benefits	Indirect benefits to institutions very important	Neglect of organizational development and Gender issues	Strong, participatory co-operatives
Morsello 2002 Brazil nut oil	PRA ranking, household surveys, interviews, time allocation	Less social differentiation in FT than in traditional markets: FT supported traditional practices	Handicrafts not seen as desirable	Limited empowerment	FT should work thorough traditional structures and cultural practices
FTA Holland Korringa 2002 Parrilli 2002, crafts Mexico Tiyapongpattana 2002, ceramics Thailand	Sub-sector analysis Survey questionnaire, FT and other craftsmen Q did not work well	Qualitative (social) benefits most important Quantitative (economic) limited	Good – access to markets, advice, skills In Thailand, mainly too small a share of market Pay and conditions similar across sectors (Mexico and Thailand)	Generalised based on small case study – eg. not true for Bangladesh No gender analysis Need more qualitative research to asses FT	Purpose to design a methodology to access impact on livelihoods and contribution of FT Need to redefine FT as impact to ATOs, not to producers
Becchetti and Costantino 2005 Herbs, Kenya	Econometric, 4 groups, FT to control groups	FT group had better food consumption, education, economic and social wellbeing, lower child mortality	FT associated with superior capabilities, crop diversification Price satisfaction with FT	Lacks gender analysis (only surveyed men and sons)	Apply the methodology for assessing FT – survey plus economic analysis – in order to make comparisons

Biggs and Messerschmidt 2005 HMP, Nepal	Actor Innovation systems framework Key informants Secondary data		HMP sustainable from environment, economic, and social responsibility perspectives	Sources of Social Responsibility: commitment to CD. FT codes of conduct, CSR, HMP organizations, policy and legal context	Example of 'Positive Deviance' good change happening anyway in society, Principles of Fair Trade linked to indigenous cultural practices
Randall 2005 Crafts	Business perspective		Need to adopt more business practices, niche market limits sales	Insufficient attention to rights, gender, politics Trend to 'apoliticism' in South	Improve quality and customer services, need wider customer base
Poncelet 2005 Coffee, bananas	Stakeholder and Institutional analysis Evaluation of FT as a 'project' – 5 criteria	Greatest impact on human and social capital, less on natural, physical and financial capital	Improves commercial relationships and access to different markets Exchange of information	Prepayments are often loans, using premium to repay Main problem is dependence of SFTO on NFTO	Encourage greater understanding of trade, and be more proactive on rights and gender
Traidcraft MAC 2005 Handicrafts VCA	Interviews with NFTO and SFTO Secondary sources	Positive, especially on financial, human and physical capital	FT partnership hopes to improve supplier power through embedded services, largely appreciated by SFTO		Handicrafts: 9 on improving market access, 5 on social issues (develop social capital)
Gent and Braithwaite 2005, Cotton VCA	Review of literature Interviews with organizations Case studies	Global view of production of cotton, focus on what FT could do to improve	Little on impact, assumption that FT does deliver on improvements	Little comment; instead argues for FT to be involved to help address problems of globalization	FT has role in advocacy
van Dooren 2005 rice VCA	Review of literature Interviews with organizations Questionnaire to experts and EFTA members	Review of mainstream, FT, and organic VC Specific chapter on benefits to producers	Case Study of Green Net, Thailand	All aspects of VC 141 conclusions and 10 main recommendations	Should learn from and apply experience of FT in Thailand

Appendix 3 Details of Research Methods

SURVEY
(S101 – S872 individual code for each respondent)

Pilot Mirpur	6 January 2005
100s Kaliganj	9, 10, 11 January 2005
200s Madhupur	15, 16, 17 January 2005
300s Kallakoir	25, 27 January 2005
400s Shariatpur	14, 15 February 2005
500s Tongi, Badda	7 February 2005 (T), 8, 9 February (B) 2005
600s Patuakhali	25, 26 February 2005
700s, Mymensingh Bonoful	3, 4, 5 March 2005
800s Mymensingh, ISSD	10, 11 March 2005

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Mirpur Fair Trade producers	6 January 2005
Kaliganj Fair Trade producers	9 January 2005
Kallakair Fair Trade producers	25 January 2005

MEETINGS WITH SFTO MANAGERS AND FIELD WORKERS

Shariatpur	15 February 2005
Patuakhali	25 February 2005
Muktagacha	3 -5 March 2005
Mymensingh	10 – 11 March 2005

MEETINGS WITH RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

1. Initial meeting	4 January 2005
2. Discuss Pilot	7 January 2005
3. Review Questionnaire	13 January 2005
4. Meeting	8 March 2005
5. Final meeting	15 March 2005

Informal meetings at the end of each field visit (8)

INFORMATION ON RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AND INTERPRETORS

Research Assistants Survey	Sex	Age	Marital status And children	Religion	Education	Employment
1 Nurul	M	22	Single	Moslem	Msc	Grameen phone
2 Shefali	F	23	Single	Moslem	Msc	student
3 Bini	F	30	Single	Moslem	BA	Civil servant
4 Shahed	M	36	Married (one child)	Moslem	MSc	Student, PhD

Interpreters Life Histories	Sex	Age	Marital status	Religion	Education	Employment
Pauli	M	38	Married	Moslem	PhD	University lecturer
Nasima	F	32	Married	Hindu	Msc	Researcher

INTERVIEWS WITH TRAIDCRAFT STAFF

1. Trustee, Traidcraft Foundation	male	14 July 2004
2. Sourcing	male	15 July 2004
3. Market Access Centre	female	20 July 2004
4. Partnership	female	20 July 2004
5. India, Country Programme Manager	female	20 July 2004
6. International Director	male	23 August 2004
7. Head, Quality Control	male	23 August 2004
8. Designer	female	23 August 2004
9. Partnership	female	1 October 2004
10. Head, Public Relations	male	13 October 2004
11. Bangladesh, Temporary Country Manager	male	8 November 2005

PRESENTATIONS AT TRAIDCRAFT

Definitions and perspectives on poverty	4 November 2004
The practice of Fair Trade in Bangladesh	19 May 2005
The impact of Fair Trade in Bangaldesh	7 September 2005
The benefits and limitations of Fair Trade employment	7 September 2005
Change and continuities: women, empowerment, and Fair Trade	8 June 2006
Review of research into Ethical and Fair Trade	17 January 2007
Impact of Fair Trade in Bangladesh, to Traidcraft Board	6 February 2007

MEETINGS WITH CRAFTFAIR

1. Chair, Board of Trustees	20 October 2004
2. New group, Kallakoir	25 November 2005
3. Planning meeting	1 December 2004
4. Meeting with management to discuss data	22 March 2005
5. Meeting with management to discuss research	7 December 2005
6. Meeting to discuss further studies	20 February 2007
Various informal meetings with a range of staff	

MEETINGS WITH BITHI

1. Preliminary meeting	7 December 2004
2. Meeting with directors to discuss data	24 March 2005
3. Meeting with directors to discuss research	27 Maqrch 2005
4. Meeting to discuss chapter	7 December 2005
5. New group Badda	7 December 2005
6. Meeting with directors to discuss research	19 February 2007

LIFE HISTORIES
Reasons for selection (FT = Fair Trade, OW = Other woman)

Badda/Tongi, 17-19 March 2005
LH1 FT, group leader, long time in group and knows history, successful
LH2 FT, also works for a commercial buyer
LH3 FT, young ambitious, does handicrafts and is also a student and paid tutor
LH4 OW, used to work in a garment factory, now commercial handicrafts at home
LH5 OW, used to work in garment factory, now with Fair Trade buyer

Madhupur, 7-8 April 2005
LH 6 FT, previous group leader, positive of change, critical of FT processes
LH 7 FT, successful, husband also involved in handicraft production
LH8 OW, large family, very poor, not in FT group
LH 9 FT, entrepreneur, lots of ideas, wants to change group practices

Kaliganj, 16 November 2005
LH10 FT, also runs a small business, Hindu
LH 11 OW, sub-contracts, tailoring business, positive development outside FT
LH 12 OW, was in producer group, husband no longer allows her to work
LH 13 FT, has increased her assets (animals), effects of flooding

Kallakair, 25 November 2005
LH14 FT, has a chicken business, understands the local markets
LH15 FT, local midwife
LH16 OW, young, not earning, mother-in-law used to be in the FT group
LH17 OW, widow, road worker, does some sub-contracting from FT group

Muktagacha, February 2007
LH18 FT, tragic life, second marriage, husband is ill, economic benefits of FT
LH19 FT, skilled worker (product development), hope for future
LH20 FT, abandoned, remarried, hard work, social benefits
LH21 FT, very poor, single (saving for dowry), range of family livelihood strategies

INTERVIEWS WITH SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IN SFTOs

Interview 1	Head, Education Dept.	CORR The Jute Works	27 November 2005
Interview 2	Director and CEO	Tarango	30 November 2005
Interview 3	Director	Dhaka Handicrafts	5 December 2005
Interview 4	Export Manager	CORR The Jute Works	6 December 2005
Interview 5	Export Manager	Prokritee	13 December 2005

Appendix 4 Research Questions (Qualitative)

Questions/headings for Focus Group Discussions

1. The history and organization of the producer group
2. How does handicraft work fit into your day?
3. Who do you sell to?
4. How much do you earn?
5. How long does it take to make… this product
6. What are the benefits of being in the Jute Works group and making jute products?
7. What do you use your handicraft income for? Is it your decision?
8. Do you like being part of the group?
9. Are there changes that have come to your villages as a result of your work/group?
10. What has being in the group taught you? Has it helped you in other ways?
11. What would you do if you were not in the group? Is there another way of earning money?
12. Are there disadvantages to being a handicraft producer?
13. Is there anything that could be improved?
14. What do your husbands do to earn a living?
15. Are relationships between different groups in the community good?
16. Are there other NGOs working in this district?
17. Wider problems/conflicts and concerns
18. Hopes for the future

Questions/headings for interviews with successful women (many additional questions arose under the headings)

1. Story of their lives
2. Main influences, especially in their success
3. Why is she working in a fair trade organization
4. What does Fair Trade mean to her?
5. Discuss Fair Trade as development: what is their (personal) approach?
6. How do norms and practices change? Do they think of themselves a an 'agent of change'?
7. Meaning of empowerment to them?
   What do they want/have?
   What do they think Bangladeshi women want in general?
   How does Fair Trade help this to happen?
8. Limitations of Fair Trade: insecurity, future of handicrafts, reliance on exports
9. Would you consider yourself a feminist?

Questions/headings/ topics for discussion in the Life Histories

For Fair Trade producers

1. Ask her to tell her life story (family, marriage, children, background)
2. Her life now: How does the family support itself?
   What is her normal day like?
   What does her husband do?
   Do her children have any paid work, and if so what?
3. Is she literate? Did she learn/improve as a result of being in the FT group?
4. Does she or her family have any health problems?
5. What change would she like to see? How could this happen?
6. What does she think of the producer group? Does it help her in other ways?
7. What does Fair Trade mean to her?

For the other women

1. Ask her to tell her life story
2. Her life now: How does the family support itself? (range of options)
   What is her normal day? (work, does she have leisure?)
   What does her husband do?
   Do her children have any paid work, and if so what?
3. Is she literate? If so, how/when did she learn?
4. Does she or her family have any health problems?
5. What changes would she like to see? How could this happen?
6. Does she have any contact with the Jute Works producer group?
   Does it help her in any way?
7. Would she like to join the producer group, and if so why?

Appendix 5

09/01/2005 Le Mare

Fair Trade Questionnaire
Bangladesh January –April 2005

The purpose of this survey is to collect information about the impact of fair trade employment and partnerships on individual producers and their families. In order to help assess the impact of fair trade on the wider community, and to compare fair trade producers to others, it will also be necessary to interview similar producers, but not in fair trade partnerships, and other typical work situations in the villages where fair trade producers live. The results of this survey will be one aspect of a wider research project, that will also include qualitative methodologies.

Questionnaire Code [~~Kallakair~~] [ ] [ ] [3][7][2] [D]

Name of person interviewed.....
Address/village.....
location if interview is not at house.....
Anyone else present during the interview.....

Interview date.....
Time at start of interview.....
Time at end of interview.....

Interviewer completed (signed by interviewer).....

Interview checked by, and date.....
Call back required on questions.....
Call back date and time.....
Reason if questionnaire rejected.....

Data entry/coding by, and date.....
Data entry checked by and date.....

Questionnaire Code

Producer area	**category**	**handicraft**	**Number**
1 Kaliganj – C	F – fair trade, handicraft	J- jute	unique number for person
2 Madhupur/Garos	N – non fair trade, handicraft	T - terracotta	
3 Kallakair	O – other paid work	E-embroidery	
4 Shariapur	X – no paid work	P-paper	
6 Patuakhali			
5 Badda			
8 Mymensingh - [redacted]			
7 Mymensingh - [redacted]			

Interviewers
A [redacted]
B [redacted]
C [redacted] Baby
D [redacted]
G [redacted]

Q2 ForN

09/01/2005

Q3 Code

Le Marc

Q1 number

Q4 RA

F FO
N NO
O
X

A [redacted]
B [redacted]
C [redacted]
D [redacted]

I Household data

1. Questionnaire code

2. Gender ; female male

cut →

3. Religion

Moslem	Hindu	Christian	Buddhist	Traditional	Other
1	2	3	4	5	99

(FT)

For handicraft producers (questions 4 -7)

4. What is the handicraft product that you make ?

Jute	embroidery/stitching	terracotta	HMPaper	Other
1	2	3	4	99

5. Do you supply your product to [redacted] or [redacted] or another buyer?

JW	Swajan	other FT buyer	nonFTbuyer
1	2	3	4

6. How long have you been making handicrafts and selling them to [redacted] or [redacted]? (years)

< 1 year 99

group

7. If you were not in this group, would you have any other opportunities to earn income?

Handicraft production	sell other goods	other paid work	no other options	Other
1	2	3	4	99

all N X O

For 'other' respondents (questions 8 - 10) including non-FT

8. Do you have a source of earned income?

network

	Jute	embroidery	terracotta	HMpaper	other sales	other paid work	no income
N-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

don't include codes

9. How long have you been involved in……(answer from question 3) (in years)

group

10. Would you like to be part of a fair trade producer group?

Yes	No	undecided	no rep
1	2	3	92

Therefore, her sources of income are

- ☐ handicraft FT
- ☐ handicraft non-FT
- ☐ other paid income
- ☐ no income

THESE QUESTIONS APPLY TO TABLE ONE

11. I would like to make a list of all the people who live here, that is who sleep here, and generally eat their meals in the house ? *By relationship to the producer: use codes below for person and main occupation*

Woman	A	Handicraft production	1	Mother	I
Husband	B	Household and childcare	2	father	J
Son	C	Work in fields, own land	3	sister	K
Daughter	D	Market trading	4	brother	L
Mother in law	E	Paid work, inc. land labour	5		
Father in law	F	student	6		
Other relatives	G	Unemployed	7		
Friends	H	leisure	8		

12. What is their main occupation? Too old to work | School, disability

13. What is the age of each of the people you have named?

10 Preschool

11. child, no school

14. Are any of these people

Married	A1
Widowed/Sep	A2
Divorced	A3
single, older	A4
daughter living with family/single.	A5. B

15. How much formal education has each member of the household had?

None	1
1 – 5 years, primary	2
6 – 10	3
SSC plus / HSC	4

5 - higher Ed, Prof.
6 - Pre school

TABLE ONE (11) person (12)occupation (13)age (14)status (15) education

Age.
1. Preschool
2. Primary Age 6–10
3. Secondary Age 11–16
4 Young Adult 17–20
5 Working Age. 21–50
6. Elderly 51+

A				

16. Are there members of your family who normally live here, but are away, and are contributing income to the family, or help you in some other way?

Toddler
Group 10 - Preschool
Age 1 - Preschool
Ed. 6 - Pre School.

365

II Current status and extent of poverty

I would like to know about how you and your family support yourselves, and what decision you make in order that the family can survive and prosper.

17. Who owns this house? Do you own any other houses?

Woman	husband	relatives	rented		owns other house	NR
1	2	3	4	5	6	92
		mother, sister		father, brother		

18. Observation or questions on repair and size of homestead (*number of buildings, approximate size, roofing material, sanitation, flooring, water supply)*

1: Poor repair, 1 room
2: Adequate, 2 rooms
3: 2 buildings, 3 rooms
4: 3 buildings, 4 rooms
Well maintained

19. What are your most important household possessions?

TV	bicycle	watch	cooking utensils	furniture	jewelry	personal	luxury
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

90 not selected
92 no response
93 none
99

THESE QUESTIONS REFER TO TABLE 2

20. and 21. Do you or members of you family own ...? *(use codes from Table 1)*
22. Have you bought any of these in the last 5 years?
23. Have you sold any of these in the last 5 years?
24. Do you rent or sharecrop any land?

Codes

TABLE 2	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)
Asset	**amt/ number**	**ownership**	**bought**	**sold**	**leasing/rent**
Land					
Cattle					
poultry					
Tools					

Own

Yes 1 No 2 90 NS 92 NR

Measured in decimal

92 - NR, don't know - (20 & 24)

N - none given

25. What do you produce from the land? Is it for your own consumption, or for sale?

	Rice	Jute	Vegetables	Fruit trees	other	NR
Own use	1	2	3	4	99	92
Sale	1	2	3	4	99	92

NR
90 NS
93 none

26. Are you or your family involved in any other agricultural activities that help to support the family?

Husking rice	harvesting	food/market	micro-enterprise	other	NR
1	2	3	4	99	92

90 NS
93 none

27. Has the amount of food you have become better or worst over the last 5 years?

Much better	better	little change	worse	much worse
5	4	3	2	1

90 NS
92 NR
93

28. Why do you think this has happened? Reasons

More Income	more land	additional assets	income handicraft	less income	bad weather	less land	ill health	NR
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	99

90 92 93

29. How many meals did your family eat yesterday?

One	two	three
1	2	3

92 NR

THESE QUESTIONS REFER TO TABLE 3

30. What did you eat yesterday?

31. Was this enough? What foods would you like to have more of?

32 . This is the month of..... Would you have less food at another time of year?

TABLE 3 (30)eat yesterday (31) amount (32)have less enough(1), more(2)

	yesterday	amount	have less
Rice			1
Dahl			2
Sark			3
Vegetables			4
Eggs			5
Meat/fish			6
Milk			7

Q30-31
1. ✓ +1 - yesterday enough
2. ✓ +2 - yesterday more
3. no tick (no response)
4. no tick +1 - not yesterday, have enough
5. no tick +2 - not yesterday, need more

Q32
1-7 ✓
90 NS
91 NA
92 NR

33. Do you have enough money to buy the following essentials (tick if yes)

Food	Salt	Soap	Clothing	School Supplies	household items	Oil	hurricane/candles
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

90 NS
92 NR
93 none

34. How would you rank you and your family in terms of the rest of the village?

Very poor	poor	the same	better off	well off	rich
1	2	3	4	5	6

92 NR

35. Has there been a change in the status of your household relative to the rest of the village over the last 5 years?

Better	worst	the same
3	1	2

NR 92

III Labour

36. Describe what you did yesterday to me. *Tick every activity mentioned*

house/food | shop | handicraft | other paid work | field work | meetings

1	2	3	4	5	6

90 NS
92 NR
93 none
99 other

37. How many hours a day do you usually spend on handicraft production? both FT and N

38. How many hours a day do you spend on other work that is paid? both F and N

39. If other paid income, what is the work involved? (not handicraft)

Selling /markets | housemaids | micro-enterprise | land labour paid | tailoring | other | none

1	2	3	4	5	99	93

90 NS
92 NR

40. Tell me how the other members of the household spend their time.

Tick for each named activity for each member of the household: may have to prompt)

TABLE 4

Person	food house	student	farming	market	handicraft production	paid work	unable to work	un/under employed

IV Employment conditions

Questions for handicraft producers.

You said that you spend….. hours a day on……production, *(or other occupation group)*.

41. How much did you earn last month from your handicraft production? (in Taka)

1 no income last month
group

42. How much does this vary from month to month?

Very little | a lot

1	2

90 NS
92 NR

43. What are the reasons for this?
Not enough orders busy with other work floods other 90 NS 92 NR 93 none
[1] [2] [3] [99]

44.Are you satisfied with the way you are paid for your handicraft work?
Yes no In advance on time wait a long time other problems
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [99] 90 NS 92 NR 93 none

45. Where do you make the handicraft product?
Home FT centre outside other workplace
[1] [2] [3] [4] 90 NS 92 NR

46.Describe the work place to me if not in your own home.
light dark safe unsafe adequate crowded toilet breaks children s/e
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] 90 NS 92 NR 99 other

47. Do you supply the product individually, or are you part of a producer group?
Individual group
[1] [2] 90 NS 92 NR

48. If in a producer group, do you have a particular role in the group?
Attend meetings leader group officer supervisor other
[1] [2] [3] [4] Accounts 5 [99] 90 NS 92 NR 93 none

49. How are the people for these jobs selected?
Particular families vote by group seniority chosen by NGOs other
[1] [2] [3] [4] [99] 90 NS 92 NR-don't know 93 none

50. Have you helped with any of the following tasks?
check quality supervise group transport products keep accounts meet visitors other
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [99] 90 NS 92 NR (93) none

51. Does the organization or person who buys the product from you, provide any services or benefits to you ?
Training skills advance payment group Skills product development micro-credit education health sanitation no services
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [93] 90 NS 92 NR 99 other

52. What are the advantages to you of making..... and selling through.....?
(give code, not a tick) 1- very important, 2 –important, 3- mentioned
income new skills confidence group/social improved status other no advantages
[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [99] [93] 90 NS 92 NR

1 ad 1
1 ad 2
1 ad 3

Table 5

53. What are the disadvantages or problems with being a .....handicraft producer?
54. Are there things that you think should be improved?

TABLE 5	(53) problem	(54) could be improved
Long hours	1	1
Hard work	2	2
Poor conditions	3	3
Not enough orders	4	4
Low pay	5	5
Physical problems	6	6

90 NS
92 NR
93 none
99 Other

Physical problems
1 Eye
2 Back
3 head
4 sore hands
5 Asthma
6 skin problems

90 NS
92 NR
99 other
93 none

Other paid work

55. Do you have another source of income besides handicraft production? 0

Yes [1] no [2] 90 NS 92 NR

56. If yes, How much did you earn last month from this income?

[ ][ ][ ][ ] 1 no income last month 92 NR

57. Are there many women in management jobs , such as group leader, or supervisor in the work place or in the organization?

None [1] a few [2] many [3] don't know [4] 90 NS 92 NR

58. Does your employer provide any other services or benefits to you?

Paper Records → [1]

Training skills [2] advance payment [3] group Skills [4] product development [5] micro-credit [6] education [7] health sanitation [93] no services

1 -Yes, paper record
92 NR
93 no services
99 other

Relevant to both handicraft production and other paid work

59. Do you enjoy your work?

Yes [1] No [2] 90 92

60. If there was something wrong, or you were concerned about something to do with your work (either handicraft production or other paid work), is there someone that you could go to in order to explain your concern?

Yes [1] no [2] 90 92

61. Who would it be ?

supervisor	NGO staff	JuteWorks	Swajan	Village leaders	Others in group	buyer	other	90 NS 92 NR 93 none
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99	

How handicraft markets work

Again, I want to consider the changes over the last 5 years.

62. Where did you sell your handicrafts 5 years ago?

In local markets	export (JW, SW)	other handicraft buyer	90 92 99
1	2	3	

Some were not selling 5 yrs ago

63. Where do you sell your handicrafts now ?

Local markets	export (JW, Sw)	other handicraft buyer	90 92 99 other
1	2	3	

64. Has the amount of handicrafts you make and sell increased or decreased over the last 5 years?

Increased	decreased	stayed the same	90 92
1	2	3	

65. Has the price you are paid for the product increased or decreased?

Increased	decreased	stayed the same	90 92
1	2	3	

66. How many buyers do you have for your handicraft product?

JW or S	other organization	one buyer	more than one buyer	at a market	90 92 99 other
1	2	3	4	5	

67. Are there difficulties in getting your handicraft products to markets?

Lack of Information	lack of transport	cultural factors	no buyers	politics hartals	other	90 92 93 none
1	2	3	4	5	99	

V Wider changes and influences

68. Are there any **new or improved** government schemes or services that are used by you or your family? *(can be prompted as may not think of them)*

roads	health clinic	school	land reform	electricity	water supply	legislation	sanitation	other	90 92 93 none
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	99	

90 69. Have you received any services or benefits from NGOs or any other group in the last 5 years?

Microfinance	education /health	training skills	water pumps	visits from fieldworkers	legal/human rights	other benefit	90 92 93 none
1	2	3	4	5	6	99	

↓ NGOs

(92) 70. Has there been a change in the type of transport in the last five years? In energy use?. Or in type of communication?

Change	previously	now
Walking	1	2
Animal & cart		
Bicycle		
Bus		
Biogas		
Electricity		
Mobile phone		
Roads improved		

1 previously ✓
2. now ✓
3. both ✓ ✓
90
92

VI Empowerment

I am interested in the effect on you as a result of your handicraft production , or other employment, and the difference that earning an income has made to you and the family.

F 71. Have you become more involved in decisions about your family since joining the fair trade group (that is producing for Jute Works or Swajan)?

Yes	no
1	2

90
92

N 72. If not in a Jute Works or Swajan group, have you become more involved in decisions about your family as a result of your handicraft production, or other paid work?

Yes	no
1	2

Yes if X 90
3 92

FT NFT

(92) 73. Do you, your husband, both of you, or other family members, make household decisions about.....

	women	producer	husband	consulted	joint decision	other family
income from handicraft any income	1		2	3	4	5
crops to plant						
small family purchases						
buying or selling land						
education of children						
marriage of children						
village problems						

6 not by women other family, does not identify

90
92

317

(90) 74. and 75. What has the income from handicrafts, or other earned income, been used for over the last five years?

	(74) Previously	(75) now
To buy food	1	2
School supplies		
Clothes		
Animals		
Land		
To start a business		
Marriage/dowry		
other		

1 spent previously ✓
2.- spend on now ✓
3. both ✓ ✓
90 NS
92 NR
99 other

91

(90) 76. Has what you learnt, as a handicraft producer, or in other paid work, helped you in other ways?

Meet people	travel/mobility	more confidence	literacy	numeracy	other
1	2	3	4	5	99

not mentioned

90 NS
92 NR
93 none

77. ~~As a result of your paid work with~~ In the last 5 years.....are you more or less likely to.....

	less likely	the same	more likely
use health services	1	2	3
approach government official			
go to market			
visit own relatives			
take part in village activities			
express your views			
send daughter to school			

1 less likely
2 the same
3 more likely
90 NS
92 NR

91

78. Do you belong to any groups or organizations?

producer	church group	NGO group	village group	social group	microfinance	none
1	2	3	4	5	6	93

90
92
99 other

79. Are relationships between different groups and families good in your village? Do you visit each other, work together, go to each other's festivals?

	Good relations	visit each other	work together	go to festivals
YES	1	1	1	1
NO	2	2	2	2

1 yes
2 no
90
92

11

(90)

Aspiration

80. What are your hopes for your future and that of your family?
81. Do you think you will be able to achieve this? *(1- yes definitely, 2 – maybe, 3-unlikely)*

	(80) hopes for future	(81)achievable
have adequate food	☐	☐ 1 ✓+1
help relatives	☐	☐ 2. ✓+2
educate sons	☐	☐ 3 ✓+3
educate daughters	☐	☐ 90
sons have paid job	☐	☐ 92
daughters have paid jobs	☐	☐
daughters/good marriage	☐	☐
buy land	☐	☐
improve house	☐	☐
buy/build another house	☐	☐
start a micro-enterprise	☐ good	☐
Owned, work ☐	Rawop ☐	
	Other ☐	

VII Risks and vulnerabilities

I now want to ask you about the risks and problems that you or your family may face.

82. When did you last face a natural disaster, such as flooding or a severe storm?

This year	last year	most years	seldom
1	2	3	4

90 NS
92 NR
93 none – not

83. Were you able to recover from its effects?

Yes	no	no effects
1	2	3

90 NR
92 NS

84. Do you have problems with violence, towards your family, or a fear of crime, or of people doing harm to you and your family?

Yes	No	unwilling to answer
1	2	3

90
92

85. What do you do if a crime or violence happens to you or your faimly? Can you call on anyone's help?
Nothing relatives village leaders other women police NGO staff religious

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

90
92
99 other

86. Was anyone in your household seriously ill in the last year? (*use codes for persons)*
ill seriously ill no

1	2	3

90
92

• WHO Y2 Codes A-L
N - no person named

Illness

87. What did you do? Actions
Rest/home traditional market remedy doctor/medicine clinic/hospital

1	2	3	4	5

90
92
93
99

88. Do you or anyone else in the household owe money, and to whom? (*use person codes*
To a moneylender microfinance group relative

1	2	3

None owed 4
90
92
99 Other

89. What was the loan used for?

• WHO - codes A-L
N - no one named

Food household necessities wedding/dowry illness micro-enterprise assets repay debt

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8 - improve house
9 education
90
92
99 other

VIII Open Questions

90. What have been the most significant changes in your life over the last 5 years?
(can be good or bad changes)

1. Worse income
2. worse status
3. no change
4. better status
5. better income
6. better status & income
7. a little change
8. Situation worse

90
92
99

91. What do you think has contributed to these changes? Codes

1 FT income +
2 handicraft income +
3 other income +
4 FT income -
5 handicraft income -
6 other income -
7. illness/disability
8 death
9 floods
10 left husband/on own
11 more family to support
12 drugs, gambling
13 debt
14 failed microenterprise/business
15 no change
16. more family workers
17 improved house, material possessions
18 her own confidence, education
19. have land
20 well educated children
21 supportive family/husband

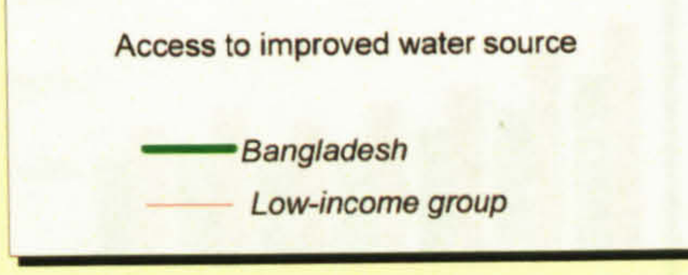
90
92
93
99

Bangladesh at a glance

3/13/07

POVERTY and SOCIAL	Bangladesh	South Asia	Low-income
2006			
Population, mid-year *(millions)*	144.4	1,470	2,353
GNI per capita *(Atlas method, US$)*	480	684	580
GNI *(Atlas method, US$ billions)*	69.9	1,005	1,364
Average annual growth, 2000-06			
Population *(%)*	1.9	1.7	1.9
Labor force *(%)*	2.2	2.1	2.3
Most recent estimate (latest year available, 2000-06)			
Poverty *(% of population below national poverty line)*	50	..	..
Urban population *(% of total population)*	25	29	31
Life expectancy at birth *(years)*	63	63	59
Infant mortality *(per 1,000 live births)*	56	66	80
Child malnutrition *(% of children under 5)*	48	45	39
Access to an improved water source *(% of population)*	74	84	75
Literacy *(% of population age 15+)*	41	60	62
Gross primary enrollment *(% of school-age population)*	109	110	104
Male	107	116	110
Female	111	105	99

Development diamond*

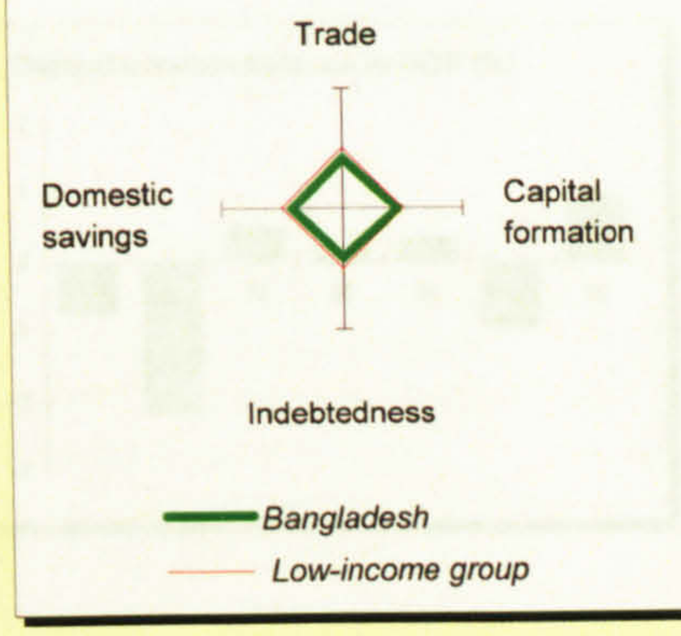


KEY ECONOMIC RATIOS and LONG-TERM TRENDS

	1986	1996	2005	2006
GDP *(US$ billions)*	21.2	40.7	60.0	62.0
Gross capital formation/GDP	16.7	20.0	24.5	25.0
Exports of goods and services/GDP	5.4	11.1	16.6	17.8
Gross domestic savings/GDP	9.8	12.4	20.0	20.3
Gross national savings/GDP	16.9	20.0	25.8	26.6
Current account balance/GDP	-5.1	-3.2	-0.9	0.9
Interest payments/GDP	0.7	0.5	0.4	..
Total debt/GDP	38.1	37.7	30.6	..
Total debt service/exports	28.4	11.4	5.8	..
Present value of debt/GDP	..	..	22.0	..
Present value of debt/exports	..	..	96.5	..

	1986-96	1996-06	2005	2006	2006-10
(average annual growth)					
GDP	4.2	5.4	6.0	6.7	6.3
GDP per capita	1.8	3.4	4.0	4.8	4.5
Exports of goods and services	11.7	9.6	15.6	15.7	12.5

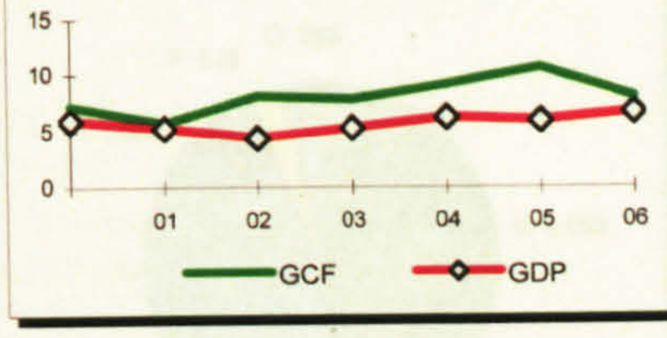
Economic ratios*



STRUCTURE of the ECONOMY

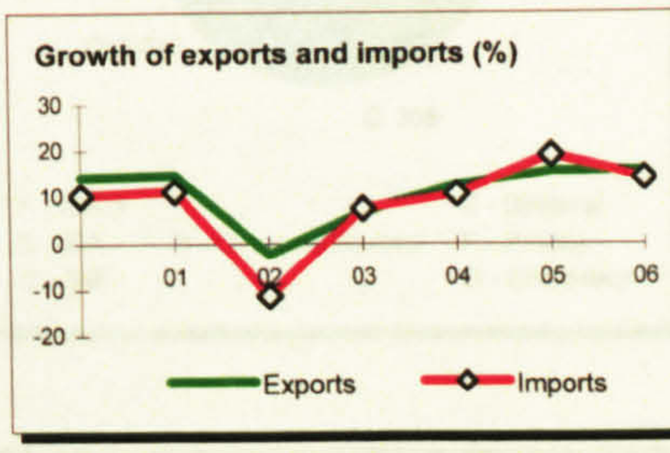
	1986	1996	2005	2006
(% of GDP)				
Agriculture	31.9	25.7	20.1	19.5
Industry	21.5	24.9	27.2	28.1
Manufacturing	14.0	15.4	16.5	17.2
Services	46.5	49.5	52.6	52.4
Household final consumption expenditure	85.8	83.2	76.4	76.1
General gov't final consumption expenditure	4.3	4.4	5.5	5.6
Imports of goods and services	12.2	18.7	23.0	24.4

Growth of capital and GDP (%)



	1986-96	1996-06	2005	2006
(average annual growth)				
Agriculture	2.3	3.6	2.2	4.5
Industry	6.5	7.0	8.3	9.6
Manufacturing	6.7	6.3	8.2	10.4
Services	3.8	5.5	6.4	6.5
Household final consumption expenditure	3.2	3.6	5.1	6.0
General gov't final consumption expenditure	4.0	8.3	7.8	7.9
Gross capital formation	6.7	8.6	10.7	8.0
Imports of goods and services	7.5	5.8	19.1	14.1

Growth of exports and imports (%)

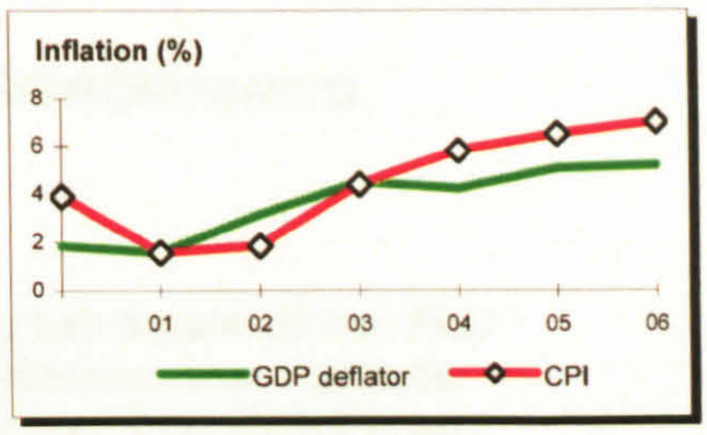


Note: 2006 data are preliminary estimates. Group data are for 2005.

* The diamonds show four key indicators in the country (in bold) compared with its income-group average. If data are missing, the diamond will be incomplete.

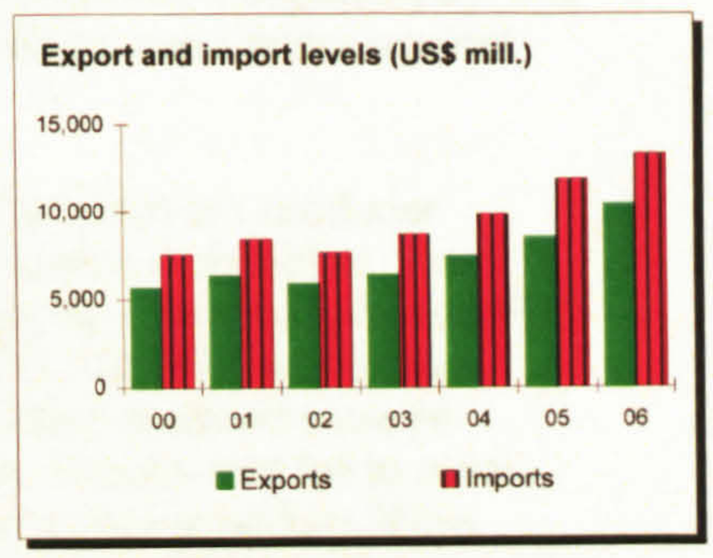
PRICES and GOVERNMENT FINANCE

	1986	1996	2005	2006
Domestic prices				
(% change)				
Consumer prices	..	6.7	6.5	7.0
Implicit GDP deflator	8.0	4.2	5.1	5.2
Government finance				
(% of GDP, includes current grants)				
Current revenue	9.5	9.0	10.5	10.7
Current budget balance	4.1	2.2	2.1	2.2
Overall surplus/deficit	-3.1	-4.5	-3.8	-3.3



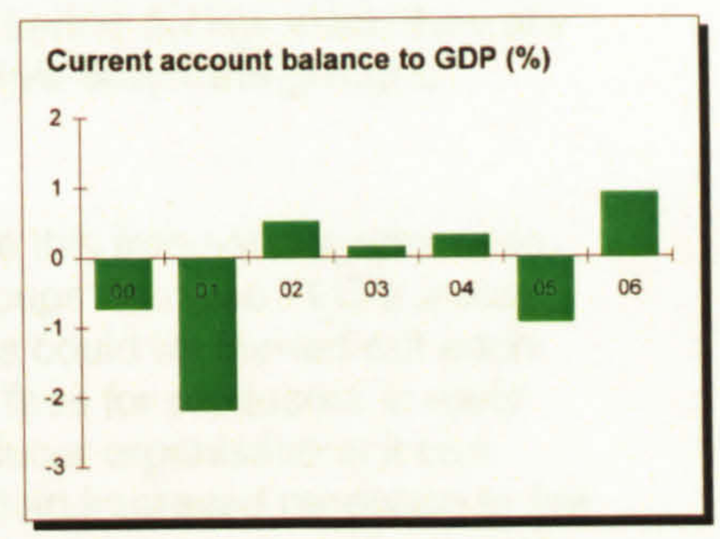
TRADE

	1986	1996	2005	2006
(US$ millions)				
Total exports (fob)	819	3,884	8,573	10,422
Raw jute	124	91	96	117
Leather and leather products	61	241	221	269
Manufactures	486	3,205	7,819	9,506
Total imports (cif)	2,364	6,947	11,870	13,301
Food	356	570	1,607	1,801
Fuel and energy	342	274	1,602	1,795
Capital goods	1,003	1,918	1,794	2,010
Export price index *(2000=100)*	46	85	119	122
Import price index *(2000=100)*	48	79	134	141
Terms of trade *(2000=100)*	96	108	89	87



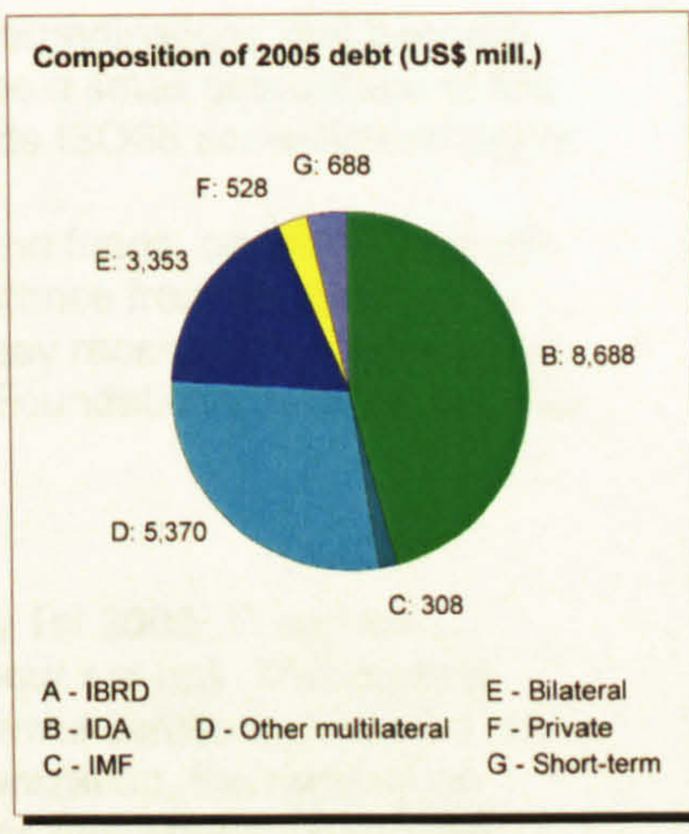
BALANCE of PAYMENTS

	1986	1996	2005	2006
(US$ millions)				
Exports of goods and services	1,043	4,437	9,750	11,718
Imports of goods and services	2,587	7,604	13,917	15,707
Resource balance	-1,544	-3,167	-4,167	-3,989
Net income	-126	55	-680	-786
Net current transfers	586	1,821	4,290	5,347
Current account balance	-1,084	-1,291	-557	572
Financing items (net)	1,212	274	624	-207
Changes in net reserves	-128	1,017	-67	-365
Memo:				
Reserves including gold *(US$ millions)*	..	1,878	2,929	3,488
Conversion rate *(DEC, local/US$)*	29.9	40.9	61.8	67.2



EXTERNAL DEBT and RESOURCE FLOWS

	1986	1996	2004	2005
(US$ millions)				
Total debt outstanding and disbursed	8,062	15,341	20,129	18,935
IBRD	61	46	0	0
IDA	2,450	5,713	8,895	8,688
Total debt service	448	672	671	791
IBRD	5	8	8	0
IDA	28	92	208	223
Composition of net resource flows				
Official grants	553	596	822	671
Official creditors	843	548	557	339
Private creditors	55	-30	-16	-9
Foreign direct investment (net inflows)	2	14	449	802
Portfolio equity (net inflows)	0	-117	4	1
World Bank program				
Commitments	383	168	707	500
Disbursements	337	279	615	547
Principal repayments	8	54	148	153
Net flows	330	225	467	394
Interest payments	25	45	68	70
Net transfers	305	180	399	325



The World Bank Group: This table was prepared by country unit staff; figures may differ from other World Bank published data. 3/13/07

Source: World Bank Country Briefing
http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/bgd-aag.pdf

Appendix 7

(FLO) FAIRTRADE PRODUCER CERTIFICATION AND MONITORING

Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO) is divided into two organisations: FLO e.V., the umbrella organisation for 20 Fairtrade national labelling initiatives, sets Fairtrade standards, develops Fairtrade business, and provides producer support. FLO-CERT is an international certification company that is owned by FLO but which operates independently. It is responsible for the inspection and certification of producer organisations and traders against Fairtrade standards.

The certification process begins with a written application to FLO-Cert from the producer organisation, often with the support of a trading partner. If the application is accepted, the organisation will be physically inspected against Fairtrade standards by a regionally-based FLO-CERT inspector. The inspector's report is then considered by the FLO-CERT Certification Committee which takes the final decision on whether to certify. Certified producers are re-inspected regularly with the frequency depending on a risk analysis. Groups that fail to meet minimum Fairtrade standards are first given corrective action within a time schedule. If the producer group fails to take the required corrective actions within the prescribed period, then the group is suspended from trading under Fairtrade terms for a fixed period during which they are requested to meet corrective actions. If they still fail to take corrective action the group is decertified and barred from trading under Fairtrade terms.

Initially, certification was provided at no cost to the producer. While this free service was seen as desirable, it in fact caused a block to the certification of new groups because FLO's limited financial resources meant that only a limited number of inspections could be carried out each year. To resolve this dilemma, FLO-CERT introduced certification fees for producers in early 2004 that have enabled FLO-CERT to expand the number of producer organisations it can inspect and add to the Fairtrade register. This in turn has provided an improved response to the rapid growth in demand from both industry and producers. The producer representatives on the FLO board unanimously approved the certification fee model and there is widespread support among producer partners.
Fairtrade certification is a sound business investment for producer organisations that become certified in response to market demand and the costs are likely to be a small percentage of the financial benefits. Moreover, FLO-CERT is currently working towards ISO65 accreditation under whose standards certification fees are compulsory.
While the majority of producers are able to pay the fee from their own funds, certification is not dependent on ability to pay. Producers can apply for financial assistance from the FLO e.V. Certification Fund which was established for this purpose or they may receive financial support from a trading partner, a national FLO member (e.g. the Fairtrade Foundation), or other external voluntary sources.

Producer Certification Fees
A new producer certification fee system was introduced on January 1st 2006. There are different fee structures for small farmer organizations and hired labour set-ups. The types of fees are: (i) application fees, (ii) initial certification fees and (iii) renewal certification fees. The actual fee charged to a group will depend upon the size of the organization, the number of products which the organization wishes to sell under Fairtrade terms and whether or not the group has any processing facilities. Further details of the exact fees can be found on the FLO-CERT website

http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/about_standards.htm

Appendix 7

THE IFAT MONITORING PROCESS

IFAT's Monitoring System is based on a three-tier process:

1. Self Assessment,
2. Mutual Review, and
3. External Verification.

Self Assessment is the first step of the monitoring process, in which members assess themselves against IFAT's Fair Trade Standards. All the standards have indicators, which member organizations must meet or show progress towards. The Self Assessment report states the degree of compliance with these indicators and is sent to IFAT every two years.

Mutual Review (peer review) is the second step. Members send their Self-Assessment reports to their trading partners allowing for comments and feedback to both the initial organization and to a Registration Committee.

The third process, External Auditing, is used to establish the credibility of an organization's Self Assessment report and its compliance with the Standards, and to check that the system itself is working. 5-10% of FTOs are audited annually, and ad-hoc External Audits can also be used if and when concerns are raised about a member's working practices.

An internal IFAT Registration Committee examines all Self-Assessment reports, Mutual Review reports and External Audits, and recommends to the IFAT Executive Committee if the organization should be registered as a Fair Trade Organization. Registered members can then use the FTO mark to identify themselves as a Fair Trade Organization.
More info at www.ifat.org/monitoring.shtml

IFAT Standards for Fair Trade

- Creating opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers (supporting the poorest producers)
- Transparency and accountability (dealing fairly and openly with trading partners)
- Capacity building (developing the skills of producers and creating opportunities for trading their products)
- Promoting Fair Trade (telling as many people as possible about Fair Trade and informing customers where products have come from)
- Payment of a fair price (ensuring that producers receive a fair price for their products)
- Gender Equity (providing equal pay and opportunities for women and men)
- Working conditions (ensuring that producers are working in a healthy and safe place)
- Child Labour (ensuring that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is respected)
- The Environment (ensuring that materials and processes used in production and packing do not damage the environment)

The full text of the standards is available at www.ifat.org/downloads/monitoringdownloads.shtml

Traidcraft's Foundation Principles (Annual Review 2004) • Traidcraft is a Christian response to poverty • Our mission is fighting poverty through trade • We respect all people and the environment • We abide by and promote fairer business practices • We strive to be transparent and accountable	**The Fair Trade Standards of ECOTA (www.ECOTAftf.org)** 1. creating opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers 2. transparency and accountability 3. capacity building 4. promoting Fair Trade 5. payment of Fair Price 6. gender equity and equal opportunity for men and women 7. working conditions following ILO conventions and laws 8. child labour only when attention is paid to the UN convention on the Rights of the Child 9. the environment: eco friendly technologies, reduce energy consumption, and create awareness of environmental hazards
Objectives of Craftfair (Annual Report 2003-2004) • to promote and assist in the formation of handicraft producers as economically viable groups • to organise rural destitute women and provide them with skill education for producing handicrafts as a supplementary source of income for their socio-economic development • to promote thrift, self-help and democratic practices among the handicraft producer groups in the management of their affairs and to make them self-reliant by group action • to provide facilities for training to the artisans and employees of the Trust by coordinating with other agencies both at home and abroad in the interest of the Trust and its beneficiaries • to participate in national and international fairs, workshops, and seminars on handicrafts • to initiate welfare activities for poor people, such as housing, educational, recreational and health care facilities for better living conditions • to establish charitable and development funds for the well being of poor artisans irrespective of caste, creed and race	**Statement on Bithi – Crafts (www.Bithi-crafts.com)** **Bithi crafts is a manufacturing and exporting company of indigenous handicrafts of Bangladesh.** Bithi crafts was established in 1999 with the objective of promoting high quality Bangladeshi handicrafts to the global marketplace. Bithi works with 600 handicraft producers, creating products in many categories such as home textiles, handmade paper product, greeting cards and stationery, using traditional techniques in appliqué, embroidery, patchwork and mirror work etc. Bithi's emphasis on contemporary design, product development and exceptional quality has already secured ardent customers in the UK, USA, Netherlands, Japan, Italy, France and Australia. From its Partnership Review with Traidcraft, on evaluating the impact of Fair Trade: "it allows us to pay the fair wage to them" (p10) "Bithi compares with the market rate and gives better." (p5)

Appendix 8 Statements of guiding principles and objectives of 4 FTOs, demonstrating different, but complementary priorities and 'meanings' associated with Fair Trade

Research Area Product, date	Geographical location	Social and cultural context	Positive factors affecting impact of Fair Trade	Negative factors affecting impact of Fair Trade	Poverty reduction Empowerment
Monipur – pilot Jute/jewellery Home-based producer group 1992	Urban, along main road into Dhaka Small enterprises mixed in with housing	Mixed housing area Middle, low income and slum Crowded Mostly Muslim	Urban area, more potential for economic enterprise Group took part in collective action New knowledge, educational programme		Confident, talkative Only group to take part in group political activity Want to learn new skills and make a range of products Reduction in poverty and signs of achieving 'good change'
Kaliganj Jute Home-based producer group 1973	Rural, densely populated Close to Dhaka Busy market Cultivation of rice, vegetables and jute. Flooding is often a problem	Known as rough area with 'outlaws', Notorious for violence and lawlessness Mixed religion: Hindu, Christian and Muslim	Active producer group New experiences, new roles Long standing members New knowledge Educational programme	Rural area noted for crime and corruption	Confident and friendly Knowledge of health and environmental issues Active in wider community Consistent signs of positive change Reduces poverty
2. Madhupur Jute Home-based producer group Have building for meetings, supported by sisters of the Catholic Mission 1975	Rural, 'jungle', relatively less densely populated Area of tribal land being reduced due to government, and Bengalis moving into their traditional land. Mainly small farmers, or landless. Cultivation of vegetables, rice and fruit	Mandi tribal group marginalised in Bangladesh Often employed as land labourers including women Matrilocal, matrilinial Christian	Cultural position of women Provision of schools and clinics by Mission Support of producer group, some opportunity for education and development inputs	Tribal group has little contact, often cheated Limited capacity of local institution to support producer group Part-time rather than full-time work	Women are active and mobile, involved in decisions Fair Trade supports these cultural advantages Some buying of assets and additional economic activity Less impact on poverty due to part-time orders
3. Kallakair Jute Home-based producer group 1975	Rural, poor village area Improved roads A few factories and mills Agricultural production Some micro enterprises Flooding can occur	Older group Many had been war widows Resistant to change in their status Muslim	Active producer group, new roles and new experiences Educational inputs Women involved in micro-enterprises	Over researched area Own ideas about the purpose of the research affected their responses	Generally confident and signs of empowerment Reduced poverty Other family enterprises New group to start in this area
4. Shariatpur Terracotta Home-based family run producer group 1980	Rural, on bend of Meghna River Regular and severe flooding Poor soil	Hindu villages Practicing traditional caste activity as potters Local market in decline	Women allowed to learn new skills, and now earn an income Export market essential for a reasonable livelihood	More conservative family model for producer group Women not given other roles (though changing) income often spent on recovering from effects of floods	Patriarchal structure of group, managed by the men. Wives want to become more involved Involvement in community as responsible wealthier family Reduces poverty

Research area Product, date	Geographical location	Social and cultural context	Positive factors affecting impact of Fair Trade	Negative factors affecting impact of Fair Trade	Poverty reduction Empowerment
5. Badda/Tongi Embroidery Production centre 1999	Urban, unplanned growth around Dhaka Many migrants from India settled at Independence. Very crowded conditions Some flooding	Poor housing, Crowded but not a slum, dirt lanes More opportunity for formal and informal economic activity Mostly Muslim	Urban area, other possibilities for work Contact with new ideas and a range of institutions Good working conditions Opportunity for social contact amongst women	Supervisor takes on roles of producer group (maintains quality) Fewer development inputs	Group of younger women with sense of some personal choice Older women similar to other Swajan producers Poverty reduced Significant number (14) of private tailoring businesses as a result of FT skills Signs of empowerment and achieving 'good change'
6. Patuakhali Embroidery Production centres 1999	Rural and remote, difficult to travel to Agricultural production, no manufacturing, or towns near by Prone to flooding Isolated	Houses of poor quality Many children appear not to be at school No alternative employment except housemaids Muslim	Good employer, good working conditions Good relationship with TDH (NGO) with whom premises are shared	Supervisor takes on roles of producer group (maintains quality) Services and development inputs through NGO remote area, few opportunities, conservative norms	Little sign of confidence or empowerment Poverty reduced, crucial to many family incomes Alternative to work in garment industry
7. Muktagacha HMP Factory site 1995	Rural village near Mymensingh Women and area appeared less poor than other rural areas Fertile soil and range of crops	Pleasant site, good working conditions Muslim, some Christians and Hindu	Well run factory, good management with regular orders Opportunity for social contact between women Monthly meetings for workers to raise concerns, and to provide educational programme	Few new roles for women Sometimes a lack of orders, but usually full-time work	Treated as employees, have meetings at work Growing confidence, sense of identity Reduction in poverty
8. Mymensingh HMP Factory site 1999 (longer under another name)	A busy town Range of small enterprises and market activity A medical college	Women in towns 'worse off ' than in villages – less social and family support, Multiple marriages and dowry raised as problems Muslim, some Hindu	Reasonable conditions and caring attitude School for children Lack of pay leaves employees in very bad position	Need capital for investment and running costs Appears isolated from other FTOs Irregular income	3 months without work or pay, but previously 6 months of full-time work Least signs of positive change, though still some differences between FTP and OW

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